



MOOREDALE SC SOCCER GUIDE TO SAFETY



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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Canada Soccer believes that every individual involved in soccer deserves the opportunity to participate safely. Children, in particular, have a right to participate in sport in a safe and enjoyable environment. The Canada Soccer Guide to Safety (the Guide), as an element of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program, presents information, best practices and principles, and guidance to support safe environments and participation.

The Guide is divided into sections, designed to cover all elements of safety both on and off the field of play, including Codes of Conduct, Child Protection, the Responsible Coaching Movement, Anti-Doping, Injury and Return to Play, Facility and Equipment Safety, and Psychological Safety. In addition, it provides resources to support key stakeholders; Coaches and Program Leaders, Parents, and Children, as well as templates, tools, and samples for organizations, to create safe environments.

Using the Guide

This guide focuses on best practices that can help member organizations to ensure a safe environment for all participants both on and off the field. The Guide is supported by and coordinated with other Guides relating to Governance, Management and Operations, and Accessibility & Inclusion. To that end, this Guide should be studied and applied in tandem with these other Guides, with which there is some interface and mutually-inclusive overlap.

Finally, note that this Guide is not an instruction manual or policy document! It is a genuine guide, aimed at helping member organizations be the best they can be, providing positive experiences for their players, coaches, match officials and volunteers. Whether an organization is striving to reach a higher level of Club Licence classification or not, Canada Soccer encourages all members to follow the principles, directions and standards laid out purely for their own benefit, and at their discretion.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide and for your commitment and contributions to soccer in Canada. We hope it is of help to you in your efforts to build great soccer organizations around the country!

SECTION II: CODES OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct is a set of rules outlining the social norms, responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, group, or organization. It helps to set a standard for the participants, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders so that they know what is expected of them in that environment.

Canada Soccer has a Code of Conduct and Ethics that applies to all members and stakeholders. Most PTSOs will also have a Code of Conduct or similar that would be applicable to those under its jurisdiction. Clubs may also wish to establish a Code of Conduct for coaches, team personnel, volunteers, players, and/or parents.

Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics

The purpose of the Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics is to ensure a safe and positive environment (within Canada Soccer's programs, activities, and events) by making individuals aware that there is an expectation, at all times, of appropriate behaviour consistent with Canada Soccer's core values. Canada Soccer supports equal opportunity, prohibits discriminatory practices, and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect.

This Code applies to Officials, Athlete Members, Life Members, players and individuals employed or engaged by Canada Soccer. The Code also applies to the Directors of the Provincial / Territorial Association Members, Professional Club Members or League Members or any other individuals who perform duties on behalf of these Members when the Members are engaged in soccer-related activities sanctioned by Canada Soccer.

This Code focuses on the conduct of actions on and off the field of play. Any breach of this Code will be addressed as described in the [Canada Soccer Disciplinary Code](#).

The Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics outlines Responsibilities of members and stakeholders, Integrity in Sport, Harassment, and Duty of Disclosure, Reporting and Cooperation.

Any behaviour prohibited by the [Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics](#) that is experienced or observed must be reported confidentially and in writing to discipline@canadasoccer.com.

Code of Conduct to Protect Children (adopted from Commit to Kids)

A Code of Conduct to Protect Children is the most important tool an organization will develop to help establish boundaries between adults/adolescents and children. It is a written overview of the organization's expectations regarding interactions with children, and it outlines that discipline will be enforced if expectations are not met. An organization should post its Code of Conduct and readily share it with everyone.

For additional information on developing a Code of Conduct to Protect Children, refer to the 10 Steps to Creating a Code of Conduct and Sample Code of Conduct to Protect Children Template in Section XIII.

SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTION

Soccer as a Safe Place and the Coach as a Trusted Adult

Research shows that a caring adult is the most important factor to ensuring a quality experience for children¹. For some young players, the soccer field may be one of the few safe places and, after the parent or guardian, a coach is one of the most influential people in a child's life. As such, coaches are in a unique position to be role models and mentors for young participants.

All coaches and individuals who work with children have a "duty of care" to the children with whom they work. A duty of care is a legal obligation which is imposed on an individual requiring adherence to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others. Coaches are required by law to always act in the best interest of the individuals they coach and not act or fail to act in a way that results in harm. This obligation also includes a responsibility to role model appropriate boundaries and professional contact at all times.

Although child serving organizations have an obligation to ensure the safety of the children in their care, including appropriate screening and monitoring of all coaches, the vast majority of coaches are positive influences on and trusted adults in the lives of the young players they coach. As coaches work with children on a regular basis and many are able to establish a positive and healthy adult-child relationship with their players, a coach may be the person a child chooses to talk to about something happening in their life. In fact, studies have shown that children are more likely to disclose maltreatment to their coach than even their teacher.

In addition, a coach may be in position to be able to detect signs of maltreatment of children in their care.

Coaches must be able to recognize signs of maltreatment and know what to do when you feel that maltreatment has taken place. It is important that coaches know how to respond to a child in danger, and how to share information appropriately with those who can help. It is important to remember that even though a child could be displaying some or all of the signs of maltreatment, this doesn't necessarily mean that maltreatment is occurring. As a coach, if you see signs in a child that are worrying, it is not your responsibility to decide if maltreatment is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it. Under Canadian child welfare laws, if you know or suspect child maltreatment, you have a legal obligation to report it. This is known as the "duty to report". Every person in Canada has the duty to report known or suspected child maltreatment by law.

For additional information on reporting, please refer to "Reporting".

International Safeguards for Children in Sport

Children have a right to participate in sport in a safe and enjoyable environment. Their rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We now know enough from research and evidence to be clear that sport does not always take place with a focus on children's rights at its centre, or sometimes fails to fully consider the risks to children, leading to organizational cultures that don't allow for the discussion of harm and abuse (Brackenridge, Kay & Rhind, 2012).

There are also some risks to children and young people which are unique to sport such as the increased risks of all forms of abuse to elite young athletes. Many sport for development programs are provided to extremely vulnerable children who may be affected by violence and abuse in their daily lives and for whom sport should be a safe haven. We should all seek to ensure that sports provision to these young people takes place in safe environments.

A draft set of Standards (now called Safeguards) were developed by a partnership of organizations working together for the Beyond Sport Summit in London, 2012. These were further developed through an extensive piloting phase over the next two years. The finalized version of the Safeguards was launched at Beyond Sport in October 2014. They lay the foundations for a holistic approach to ensuring children's safety and protection in all sports contexts internationally.

The International Safeguards for Children in Sport aim to outline the things that should be put in place by any organization providing sports activities to children and young people. The Safeguards should be viewed as guides, which facilitate an organization's journey towards safeguarding children rather than an end in themselves. These Safeguards represent collective good practice at a point in time and will be subject to periodic review to ensure they reflect developments within safeguarding practice.

The Safeguards aim to:

- ▶ Help create a safe sporting environment for children wherever they participate and at whatever level;
- ▶ Provide a benchmark to assist sports providers and funders to make informed decisions;
- ▶ Promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children;
- ▶ Provide clarity on safeguarding children to all involved in sport; and,

Are based on the following principles:

- ▶ All children have the right to participate, enjoy and develop through sport, in a safe and inclusive environment, free from all forms of maltreatment; bullying, abuse, harassment, violence, discrimination, neglect and exploitation

¹ HIGH FIVE Principles of Healthy Child Development

- ▶ Children have the right to have their voices heard and listened to. They need to know who they can turn to when they have a concern about their participation in sport
- ▶ Everyone, organizations and individuals, service providers and funders, has a responsibility to support the care and protection of young people
- ▶ Organizations providing sports activities to children and young people have a legal and moral duty of care for them
- ▶ There are certain factors that leave some children more vulnerable to abuse, and steps need to be taken to address this
- ▶ Children have a right to be involved in shaping safeguarding policy and practice
- ▶ Organizations should always act in the best interests of the child
- ▶ Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and not be discriminated against based on gender, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, beliefs, religious or political affiliation
- ▶ The processes and activities for the creation, development and implementation of safeguarding measures should be inclusive

As organizations review the Safeguards, they should consider the five-step approach, outlined below to facilitate their reflection on the current system and inform their efforts towards ensuring the safety of children.

1. Preparing for the journey — Raise awareness of the need to safeguard children
2. Preparing to implement — Reflecting on where you are now and prioritizing your next steps
3. Developing your Safeguard
4. Implementing your Safeguard
5. Embedding your Safeguard

For more information on developing safeguarding in your organization please visit:

http://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/safeguarding_toolkit/

Safeguard 1: Developing your policy

What — Any organization providing or with responsibility for sports activities for children and young people under the age of 18 should have a safeguarding policy. This is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children involved in sport from harm and provides the framework within which procedures are developed.

Why — A safeguarding policy makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children and young people. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty of care seriously. It also takes account of specific factors that may leave some children more vulnerable.

Criteria for Success:

- ▶ You have a safeguarding policy which is clearly written and easy to understand
- ▶ The policy clearly describes your understanding and definitions of all forms of maltreatment
- ▶ The policy covers your organization's commitment to safeguard children in all aspects of your work
- ▶ The policy is clear that all children have equal rights to protection
- ▶ This policy is officially endorsed by staff at the highest level of your organization
- ▶ Staff at the highest level of the organization have the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the policy
- ▶ All staff, volunteers, carers or other representatives have signed up to the policy
- ▶ Your organization has consulted with children, parents/carers and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your policy

Safeguard 2: Developing a system to respond to safeguarding concerns

What — Procedures describe the operational processes required to implement organizational policy and provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances. They clarify roles and responsibilities, and lines of communication. Effective systems are required which help to process any complaints or concerns and support any victims of violence. You should build on existing systems and understand your role with regards to relevant national systems and legislation.

Why — For safeguarding to be effective, procedures have to be credible for children. Procedures help to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child's safety or well-being. They also help you to comply with and implement legislation and guidance. Child maltreatment is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Organizations have a duty to ensure that advice and support is in place to help people to play their part in safeguarding children.

Criteria for Success:

- ▶ There are clear procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or well-being, both within and external to the organization
- ▶ Your organization has arrangements in place to provide support to children, volunteers and staff during and following an incident, allegation or complaint
- ▶ There is an identified member of staff in your organization responsible for leading on safeguarding
- ▶ Your organization provides children and young people with information about their rights and about who they can turn to if they are worried, in a process which empowers them

- ▶ Your organization has made information available to children and their parents/caregivers, about what is likely to happen following a disclosure, in a format and language that can be easily understood by everyone
- ▶ Your organization has a process for dealing with complaints in a fair and transparent way, that includes an appeals process
- ▶ All incidents, allegations and complaints are recorded, monitored and stored securely
- ▶ Your organization has consulted with children, parents/caregivers and staff as part of the initial development and/or ongoing review of your response system

Safeguard 3: Advice and support

What — Arrangements made to provide essential information and support to those responsible for safeguarding children. Children and young people are advised on where to access help and support.

Why — You have a duty to ensure advice and support is in place to help people to play their part in safeguarding children such that they know who they can turn to for help.

Criteria for Success

- ▶ Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with relevant child protection agencies, NGOs and community groups providing support on child protection
- ▶ Your organization ensures that staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have engagement with specialist advice, support and information
- ▶ Children are provided with advice and support on keeping themselves and one another safe
- ▶ Your system acknowledges that children with additional vulnerabilities (for example, a disability) may face extra barriers to getting help
- ▶ Parents/carers in the wider community are provided with information, advice and support on safeguarding children

Safeguard 4: Minimizing risk to Children

What — Measures to assess and minimize the risks to children.

Why — Some people, who work or seek to work in sport in a paid or voluntary capacity, pose a risk to children. Children are also at risk when placed in unsuitable places or asked to participate in unsuitable activities, including age-inappropriate activities, over-training and through unrealistic expectations being placed on them. It is possible to minimize these risks by putting safeguards in place.

Criteria for Success

- ▶ Risk assessments are available and conducted for activities, transport, accommodation and spaces
- ▶ Steps are taken to minimize any risks identified through a risk assessment
- ▶ If the risks are assessed to be too significant then the activity does not go ahead
- ▶ Training is available to help staff and volunteers recognize the additional risks some children are exposed to, because of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture

Safeguard 5: Guidelines on behaviour

What — Codes of conduct to describe what an acceptable standard of behaviour is and promote current best practice.

Why — Children's sport should be carried out in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. Standards of behaviour set a benchmark of what is acceptable for all.

Criteria for Success

- ▶ Your organization has written guidelines for behaviour (codes of conduct) which contain statements about treating people with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness
- ▶ Your organization has guidance and expectations around activities that include time spent away from home, including placing children in the care of others and overnight stays
- ▶ Where organizations are involved in placing children in the care of others, frequent meetings are held with the child to discuss their experiences
- ▶ Your organization has guidance around working with children who have a disability
- ▶ Your organization has guidance around the appropriate use of information technology and social media to make sure that children are not put in danger and made vulnerable to exploitation
- ▶ Your organization has guidance on positive ways of managing the behaviour of children that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment, and are age and gender appropriate
- ▶ Your organization has guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards others, particularly other children (for example, a learning agreement)
- ▶ Your organization has guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of adults towards children
- ▶ There are clear consequences for not following the guidelines on behaviour that are linked to organizational disciplinary procedures

- ▶ The highest level of the organization has the responsibility to ensure that the guidelines are followed
- ▶ Your organization has consulted children, parents/ carers and staff as part of the initial development and/ or on-going review of your organization's guidelines on behaviour

Safeguard 6: Recruiting, training, and communicating

What — Recruiting appropriate members of staff, creating opportunities to develop and maintain the necessary skills and communicating regarding safeguarding.

Why — Everyone in contact with children has a role to play in their protection. They can only do so confidently and effectively if they are aware, have the necessary understanding of, and the opportunity to develop, practice and implement key skills. Organizations providing sporting activities for children have a responsibility to provide training and development opportunities for staff and volunteers.

Criteria for Success

- ▶ Job descriptions contain statements about treating people with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness.
- ▶ The recruitment process includes an interview, character/ employment references and a background check in line with local legislation
- ▶ All staff, volunteers and other relevant people have been trained on safeguarding and child protection, including how to report concerns
- ▶ The highest level of the organization has the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the training
- ▶ All staff, volunteers and relevant people with special responsibilities for safeguarding have access to regular additional training and specialist support
- ▶ Your organization has consulted with children, parents/carers and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your organization's recruitment, training and development

Safeguard 7: Working with Partners

What — Action taken by the organization to influence and promote the adoption and implementation of measures to safeguard children by partner organizations.

Why — A number of sports organizations have both a strategic and a delivery role in relation to children and young people. Where organizational partnership, membership, funding or commissioning relationships exist or develop with other organizations, the organization should use its influence to promote the implementation of safeguarding measures. The organization should provide or signpost support and resources in relation to implementing adequate safeguarding measures. The organization should actively promote the adoption of the International Safeguards for Children in Sport.

Criteria for Success

- ▶ Your organization has worked with partners/members to ensure that there are shared expectations around safeguarding
- ▶ Your organization has worked with partners/members to agree on how to share learning about making sport safer for children
- ▶ Your organization has shared written guidance on current best practice in relation to working with children (for example sharing the International Safeguards for Children in Sport)
- ▶ Your organization's safeguarding policy represents an essential part of any partnership/membership agreements
- ▶ Your organization publicizes information about your policy to your community, partners, and members
- ▶ Your organization works to sensitize your communities to the importance of safeguarding children

Safeguard 8: Monitoring and evaluation

What — The on-going monitoring of compliance and effectiveness, involving all relevant groups.

Why — Organizations need to know whether safeguarding is effective and where improvements and adaptations are needed or recognize patterns of risk.

Criteria for Success

- ▶ There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your organization's:
 - ▶ Policy
 - ▶ System for responding to safeguarding concerns
 - ▶ Advice and support
 - ▶ Systems to minimize the risks to children
 - ▶ Guidelines for behaviour
 - ▶ Recruitment, training and communication
 - ▶ Work with partners to safeguard children
- ▶ The highest level of the organization has the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system
- ▶ Your organization has consulted with children, parents/ carers and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your monitoring and evaluation system

Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport — IOC Toolkit for IFs & NOCs

In addition to the International Safeguards for Children in Sport, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recently introduced its own toolkit designed to assist National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs) in the development of policies and procedures to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport. Although the toolkit targets NOCs and IFs, the intended audiences include

administrators, coaches, parents, and athletes involved in organized sport and presents a step-by-step guide to implementing a safeguarding policy, underpinned by case studies, research, best practice guidelines, templates, and an online course.

To increase the effectiveness and reach of an athlete safeguarding policy, organizations should consider the overall athlete safeguarding strategy, focused in three areas:

1. Development of policies and procedures
2. Prevention mechanisms
3. Management of reports of harassment and abuse

While these important focuses, amongst others, are presented in this Guide, the IOC Safeguarding Toolkit discusses them in a step-by-step manner. The full IOC Safeguarding Toolkit as well as additional information and resources are available at the following website:

<https://hub.olympic.org/athlete365/safeguarding/>

Commit to Kids

Child-serving organizations:

- ▶ Have an ethical and legal obligation to help protect the children they serve from victimization.
- ▶ Are at greater risk of attracting individuals who have a sexual interest in children as well as those with emotional/psychological issues that could result in harm to children.
- ▶ Have a greater responsibility to protect children from victimization.
- ▶ Must establish safeguards in the form of programs, strategies, policies, and protocols in order to prevent or stop abuse.
- ▶ Must keep the safety of the children they serve paramount. If child abuse occurs, the immediate and long-term protection of the child is crucial and should be addressed by the implementation of detailed reporting procedures and protocols.
- ▶ Should foster a culture of transparency, where talking about sensitive issues is encouraged and where sensitive topics are open for discussion, creating trust and accountability.
- ▶ Require standard and enhanced screening tools such as criminal record checks, vulnerable sector screenings, child abuse registry checks, and reference checks.
- ▶ Must stop and intervene as soon as possible if any inappropriate behaviour and abuse is discovered.

Commit to Kids is a program to help child-serving organizations create safe environments for children. Developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, a national charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children, Commit to Kids provides policies, strategies, and a step-by-step plan for reducing the risk of

child sexual abuse, encouraging organizations to take an active, participatory role in protecting children in their care.

Adults are responsible for protecting the children in their care. Commit to Kids teaches organizations how to define appropriate boundaries between adults and children and create, safe, respectful environments.

Commit to Kids will help organizations:

- ▶ Prevent child sexual abuse through increased awareness and education
- ▶ Evaluate risks that exist
- ▶ Teach employees/volunteers (who will then teach children) the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- ▶ Provide employees/volunteers with specific strategies on how to prevent abuse
- ▶ Design programs that focus on child safety and supervision
- ▶ Establish clear boundaries between employees/volunteers and children
- ▶ Ensure that allegations of sexual abuse are handled in a sensitive, timely, and effective manner
- ▶ Understand their legal obligations to report child sexual abuse to a child welfare and/or law enforcement agency
- ▶ Ensure the highest standard of practice when working with children

Child-serving organizations are committed to providing safe and nurturing environments; however, because they work with children, they are vulnerable to attracting employees/volunteers who want to access and sexually abuse children or who may have inappropriate boundaries and relationships with children. As such, organizations must become more vigilant in establishing guidelines and protocols to protect children in their care. Commit to Kids teaches organizations how to proactively develop and implement policies and procedures to improve the personal safety of children. It will also help organizations reduce the likelihood that an offender will successfully gain access to and sexually abuse a child and to more quickly identify, intervene, and terminate if abuse has occurred.

Commit to Kids consists of a resource manual, a training video, and series of samples and templates. It also provides a step-by-step plan to help prevent child sexual abuse. For more information on Commit to Kids or to request a Commit to Kids resource manual, please visit www.commit2kids.ca.

In addition, in conjunction with the Coaches Association of Canada and National Coach Certification Program (NCCP), Commit to Kids includes an online training module for coaches. This training provides coaches with practical information to help them enhance child and youth safety in sport. The goal of the training is to empower coaches and support the great work they are doing with children and youth.

The Commit to Kids for Coaches online training addresses the importance of understanding boundaries, sexual misconduct, and reporting of inappropriate behaviour. Specifically, users will learn about:

- ▶ Child sexual abuse
- ▶ The grooming process
- ▶ How to handle disclosures of child sexual abuse
- ▶ The impact of child sexual abuse
- ▶ How to create a Child Protection Code of Conduct to Protect Children for your organization
- ▶ Policies and procedures to use to protect children in your organization
- ▶ The Canadian Centre for Child Protection's Commit to Kids child sexual abuse prevention program for child-serving organizations

In addition to advancing knowledge in these important areas, completion of this training is credited with 3 NCCP professional development (PD) points towards maintenance of certification.

For additional information on Commit to Kids for Coaches Online Training, please visit www.protectchildren.ca/app/en/training-vta-coaches.

Reporting (adapted from Commit to Kids)

Organizations must have internal reporting procedures regarding the following types of incidents:

1. Child Maltreatment:

As outlined above, Canadian child welfare laws set out the duty to report and require all people to report suspicions based on reasonable grounds that a child is/ or has been sexually abused; and/or disclosure of child sexual abuse.

2. Misconduct:

An employee/volunteer's inappropriate behaviour towards a child or children.

The action taken by the organization will depend upon the nature of the incident; however, it is important for the organization to distinguish between illegal behaviour and inappropriate behaviour and establish appropriate reporting procedures for each.

In the event that an employee/volunteer's misconduct is serious enough to lead to dismissal, it must be reported to the organization's governing authority (District/Region and/ or P/TSO). P/TSOs must have in place a process of tracking, reviewing, and adjudicating reported incidents of misconduct. Following the adjudication, P/TSOs may inform member organizations with whom the individual is registering in the future as well as Canada Soccer in order to inform potential future organizations outside the jurisdiction of the P/TSO.

External Reporting:

If a child is believed to have been sexually abused, the obligation is to report the incident to the child's parent, a child welfare agency and/or a law enforcement agency. Failure to report may constitute an offence under a provincial/territorial child welfare act. Additionally, it may constitute professional misconduct for an individual in a position of trust or an ethical violation for individuals who are registered with professional associations. This duty to report applies even if the information is told in confidence. As it involves individuals and organizations outside of the organization, this process is known as external reporting.

In instances that require external reporting, the individual reporting the incident should also follow the internal reporting procedures.

Internal Reporting:

Any employee/volunteer who suspects or becomes aware of another employee/volunteer's inappropriate behaviour should follow internal reporting procedures. Misconduct and inappropriate behaviour should be clearly outlined in the Code of Conduct to Protect Children and Guidelines for Appropriate/ Inappropriate Conduct between adults/adolescents and children. Although procedures may vary among organizations, at minimum, the individual's supervisor/manager and/ or the head of the organization must be notified. It is just as important to document situations involving potential misconduct leading to internal reporting as it is in situations that require external reporting.

For additional information on Reporting, including tools and templates, please refer to the Commit to Kids Resource Manual or visit <http://www.commit2kids.ca/app/en/>.

Priorities

Although all of the initiatives presented by the International Safeguards for Children in Sport and Commit to Kids should be considered as best practices for child protection, it is recognized that not all member organizations have the capacity and resources necessary to implement them all. As such, Canada Soccer, in consultation with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and aligned to the Club Licensing Program, has established priorities for Clubs operating within the licence categories. In addition, all member organizations are encouraged to utilize the Commit to Kids Child Protection Questionnaire provided in Section XI to help in identifying what systems are in place for preventing child sexual abuse, as well as any areas that may be lacking.

Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer

An essential element of quality sport is the provision of a safe environment for participants. In support of this principle, all organizations recognized in the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program must have in place the following:

Code of Conduct to Protect Children

- ▶ The Organization has a Code of Conduct to Protect Children for Coaches and Team Personnel that

establishes appropriate boundaries between adults and children (i.e. appropriate/inappropriate conduct) and consequences of inappropriate conduct.

- ▶ The Code of Conduct to Protect Children is shared with Coaches, Team Personnel, and Parents.
- ▶ The Code of Conduct to Protect Children is signed by all Coaches and Team Personnel.

Policies

- ▶ The Organization has Guidelines for Appropriate/ Inappropriate Conduct between adults/adolescents and children.
- ▶ The Organization has a policy outlining what to do if you witness inappropriate conduct.
- ▶ The Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct Guidelines and what to do if you witness inappropriate conduct are shared with Coaches, Team Personnel, and Parents.

Screening

- ▶ All Team Personnel must provide a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check (if applicable) every two to five years.

Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence

In addition to the Foundational Criteria for Standards for Quality Soccer, organizations Licensed as a Canada Soccer National Youth Clubs must also have in place the following:

Commit to Kids Training

- ▶ At least one individual from the organization must complete the Commit to Kids online training.
- ▶ This individual must be identified as the primary liaison for child protection within the organization and contact information provided to Coaches, Team Personnel, and Parents.
 - ▶ To access Commit to Kids for Coaches online training, visit: www.protectchildren.ca/coach
- ▶ The organization must have a Commit to Kids resource manual and demonstrate active commitment to implementation of best practices in child protection as outlined in the manual.
 - ▶ To order a copy of the Commit to Kids Program Kit, visit: www.protectchildren.ca/order

All levels of clubs are encouraged to connect with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection for additional information, support and reduced group rates. Email contact@commit2kids.ca to connect with a program coordinator.

SECTION IV: RESPONSIBLE COACHING MOVEMENT

The Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) is a call to action to keep sport healthy and safe by addressing the important role of coaches of in dealing with issues relating to the health and safety of athletes, both on and off the field of play. A multi-phase system-wide movement, coordinated by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, the RCM has the potential to affect all sport organizations, coaches, and the participants in their care. The RCM is a call to action for organizations to implement realistic change based on their individual state of readiness.

With a vision of creating change by 2020, Clubs are encouraged to take the **Responsible Coaching Movement Pledge** and put that pledge into action using the recommended action plan and timeline provided in https://www.canadasoccer.com/files/TEMPLATE_EAP.docx. Each organization will need to determine a realistic process for creating change based on their individual state of readiness, in order for it to be successful in the long-term.

The RCM focuses on three steps to responsible coaching:

1. Rule of Two
2. Background Screening
3. Ethics and Respect Training

Rule of Two

The Rule of Two serves to protect minor athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that more than one adult is present. Vulnerable situations can include closed doors meetings, travel, and training environments. Organizations are encouraged to create and implement policies and procedures that limit the instances where these situations are possible.

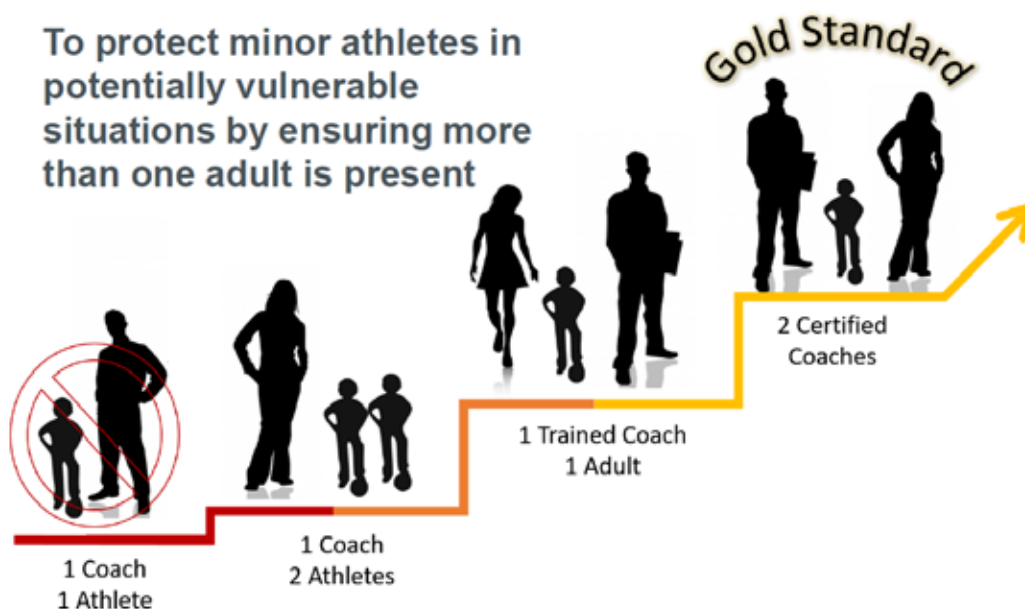
Ultimately, the Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and NCCP trained or certified coaches with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation. This means that any one-on-one interaction between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and view of the second coach, with the exception of medical emergencies. In the event where screened and NCCP trained or certified coaches are not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited. In all instances, one coach/volunteer must reflect the genders of the athletes participating or be of an appropriate identity in relation to the athlete(s).

The following diagram depicts the “staircase approach” to the Rule of Two. While the Gold Standard is the preferred environment, it is not expected that it will be reached at all times. The alternatives presented, although increasing risk, are acceptable and would be considered to be in alignment with the Rule of Two. The one-on-one interaction between a coach and an athlete without another individual present, as depicted at the lowest stair in the diagram, is to be avoided in all circumstances.



Purpose of Rule of Two

To protect minor athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present



Screening

Screening all those involved in delivering soccer programs and administering the sport is a vital part of providing a safe sporting environment. Organizations are responsible, by law, to do everything reasonable to provide a safe and secure environment for participants in their programs, activities, and events. The purpose of screening is to identify individuals involved with the organization's activities who may pose a risk to the organization and its participants.

The screening process involves using a number of different tools to ensure staff, coaches, and volunteers meet the necessary minimum standards to coach or work with athletes. These tools include comprehensive job postings and position descriptions, criminal record checks, interviews and reference checks, as well as appropriate training and monitoring practices.

Canada Soccer recommends that all member organizations and affiliates adopt and utilize the following screening processes for all employees and volunteers who may work directly with children and adolescents, including but not limited to all coaches and team personnel.

1. Develop a clear Job Description and Posting.
Be specific about the duties associated with the position, including key responsibilities, performance criteria, accountability, lines of reporting, and the level and type of contact with children. Consider the qualifications required for the position including both interpersonal skills (the ability to interact with others) and values, attitudes, and beliefs (e.g. understanding of appropriate behaviour, knowing how to interact with children in a healthy way, etc.), as well as professional knowledge (certification, experience, etc.).
2. Establish a formal application and recruitment process
 - a. Have the candidate complete a Job Application (see Section 13.5, including:
 - i. A Screening Disclosure Form (see Section 13.6)
 - ii. A release to allow the organization to contact the candidate's direct supervisor at the most recent organization with whom the candidate has worked/volunteered and permission for that individual to release information on the candidate's interactions with children
 - b. Interview the candidate
 - c. Check References
3. Conduct Background Screening

All employees and volunteers must complete an initial Criminal Record Check (CRC) and Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) or an Enhanced Police Information Check (E-PIC) as well as a Child Abuse Registry Check, if available in the province or territory.

An E-PIC is an online screening tool that may facilitate and enhance the current screening processes. Additional information on E-PIC can be found at [Enhanced Police Information Check \(E-PIC\)](#).

Screening may also be done by completing a CRC with a local police service. A VSC can only be completed by a local police service and is required for a specific subset of the population at the time of the initial screening (for full information on Vulnerable Sector Checks, please [click here](#)).

In some cases, there may be delays in receiving the results of the requested CRC and/or VSC. In these cases, organizations should utilize the following guidelines:

- ▶ Ensure the applicant has completed the Screening Disclosure Form as outlined above.
- ▶ Any employee/volunteer awaiting screening results should be under close supervision.
- ▶ Follow up with program participants. Regular contact with participants and family members can act as an effective deterrent to someone who might otherwise do harm.

Screening Review Criteria:

A satisfactory CRC/E-PIC is either:

- ▶ confirmation from the police or third-party provider that no criminal records and / or charges exist; or
- ▶ that any existing convictions and / or charges are not relevant to the position.

In determining whether any convictions and / or charges are relevant to the position, the organization may gather information by means which may include, without limitation, a telephone or personal interview with the individual and / or other persons or agencies.

The organization, in making the final decision, should consider the following:

- a. Relationship of the offence(s) to the nature of the position;
- b. Number and nature of the charges and/or convictions;
- c. When the offence(s) occurred; and
- d. What the individual has done since the date of the offence.

If, after the review, the organization determines that the individual poses a risk and is not an appropriate candidate for the position, the organization should immediately notify the individual in writing as to their status with the organization.

Organizations should not necessarily refuse a position to an individual because he or she has been charged with or convicted of an offence of a type which does not pose a risk to its members, considering the duties of the position the person is seeking to occupy.

Relevant Offences

The following is a list of non-exhaustive examples that are considered to be relevant offences:

- i. Any offence involving the possession, distribution, or sale of any child-related pornography
- ii. Any sexual offence
- iii. Any offence involving theft or fraud
- iv. Any offence for trafficking and/or possession of drugs and/or narcotics
- v. Any offence involving conduct against public morals
- vi. Any crime of violence including but not limited to, all forms of assault
- vii. Any offence involving a minor or minors
- viii. In the event that the position requires the transportation of others, any offence involving the use of a motor vehicle, including but not limited to impaired driving

Criminal Convictions

A conviction for any of the following Criminal Code offences (non-exhaustive list) could result in removal from designated positions, competitions, programs, activities and events:

- i. Any offence of physical or psychological violence
- ii. Any crime of violence including but not limited to, all forms of assault
- iii. Any offence involving trafficking of illegal drugs
- iv. Any offence involving the possession, distribution, or sale of any child-related pornography
- v. Any sexual offence
- vi. Any offence involving theft or fraud

As it is outdated as soon as it is issued, it is important that coaches, team personnel, staff, and volunteers renew their E-PIC or CRC frequently. Best practice calls for a new E-PIC or CRC every 2-5 years.

4. Complete a new employee/volunteer orientation

All new employees/volunteers should receive orientation. This should include but not be limited to training in organizational policies and procedures

relating to safety, a clear explanation of the Code of Conduct and appropriate versus inappropriate interactions between adults and children, and the internal and external reporting processes.

5. Ensure proper supervision

Supervision is key to reducing the likelihood that children will be victimized and is one of the most critical ways to ensure your organization is safe. Establishing a probationary or trial period is a good way for the organization to assess whether a new employee/volunteer is the right fit. The goals of effective supervision are to:

- ▶ Support and motivate while developing an employee/volunteer's skill set
- ▶ Communicate the culture, values, and objectives of the organization
- ▶ Provide guidance, feedback, and coaching
- ▶ Foster accountability
- ▶ Communicate key information
- ▶ Detect misconduct and prevent child maltreatment

Respect Training

Respect Group was founded in 2004 with a single purpose; empowering all sport stakeholders to recognize and prevent ALL forms of MALTREATMENT; bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination (**BAHD**) through interactive, online certification. The "Respect Platform" which is focused on building a holistic culture of respect, has become the standard training environment for Canadian sport. Having **certified over one million Canadians**, Respect Group has implemented the Respect Platform for hundreds of sport organizations. Respect in Sport certification has also become a foundational element within the "Responsible Coaching Movement", led by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.

Three Distinct On-line Training Modules for Sport Organizations

Training Module	Audience	Payment
Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program (Seamless Locker Integration and 3 NCCP PD credits) 150 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Coaches/Managers ▶ Officials ▶ Athletes 14 and up ▶ Parent Volunteers 	User pay via PayPal or Organization payment
Core Curriculum Elements		
✓ Preventing/Reporting Bullying	✓ Preventing/Reporting Cyber-Bullying	✓ Preventing/Reporting Sexual Abuse
✓ Preventing/Reporting Physical Abuse	✓ Preventing/Reporting Physical Abuse	✓ Preventing/Reporting Emotional Abuse
✓ Preventing/Reporting Neglect	✓ Preventing/Reporting Hazing	✓ Preventing/Reporting Harassment
✓ Preventing/Reporting Discrimination	✓ Mental Health Outcomes	✓ Power Dynamics
✓ Positive Emotions	✓ Building Self-esteem	✓ Physical Development/LTPD
✓ Legal Responsibility/Duty of Care	✓ Empowering the Bystander	✓ Concussion/Injury Management
Note: The Activity Leader Program is supported by the RESPECT Resource Line		

Training Module	Audience	Payment
Respect in Sport Parent Program 60 Minutes	One adult per athlete's family	User pay via PayPal or Organization payment
Core Curriculum Elements		
✓ Preventing/Dealing with Bullying, Abuse, Harassment and Discrimination	✓ The Car Ride Home	✓ Empowering the Bystander
✓ Setting Realistic Expectations	✓ Building Self-esteem	✓ Physical Development/LTPD
✓ Positive Sport Relationships	✓ Winning and Losing	✓ Concussion/Injury Management

Training Module	Audience	Payment
Respect in the Workplace 90 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Club Employees ▶ Club Board Members ▶ Club volunteers 	Organization payment
Core Curriculum Elements		
✓ Preventing/Reporting Bullying, Abuse, Harassment and Discrimination	✓ Mental Health Outcomes	✓ Power Dynamics
✓ Empowering the Bystander	✓ Managing Emotions	✓ Responsibilities as a Co-worker

Ethics Training

Increasing coaches' ethical conduct and ethical behaviour toward athletes requires that coaches be trained to understand what it means to act ethically. This training includes the Make Ethical Decisions module, which is a cornerstone of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). By successfully completing the Make Ethical Decisions (MED)

training, coaches will be fully equipped to handle ethical situations with confidence and surety. MED training helps coaches identify the legal, ethical, and moral implications of difficult situations that present themselves in the world of team and individual sport.

For more information on ethics training, please [click here](#).

SECTION V: ANTI-DOPING

The Canadian Anti-Doping Program

The **Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES)** is the custodian of the **Canadian Anti-Doping Program (CADP)**; the set of rules that govern anti-doping in Canada. The CADP consists of several components such as in- and out-of-competition testing, education, medical exemptions, and the consequences of doping violations. The CADP is compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code and all international standards.

The Canadian Soccer Association has adopted the CADP which means that you can be confident that you are part of a world-class anti-doping program that is designed to protect athletes' rights and ensure a level playing field. [The Canadian Soccer Association's anti-doping policy reflects and supports the CADP.](#)

While the CCES administers anti-doping for the Canadian sport community, you may also be subject to the rules of your international federation. [Learn more about FIFA's anti-doping policies and procedures.](#)

The CCES recommends that athletes take the following actions to ensure they don't commit an inadvertent anti-doping rule violation:

- ▶ [Know your rights and responsibilities](#) as an athlete with regard to anti-doping.
- ▶ Always [comply with a testing request](#) if you are notified for doping control.
- ▶ [Check all medications and products before taking them](#) to ensure they do not contain ingredients that are banned.
- ▶ Verify your [medical exemption](#) requirements.
- ▶ Do not take [supplements](#), but if you do, take steps to minimize your risk.
- ▶ Get the latest news. [Sign up to receive CCES media releases and advisory notes.](#)

Additional resources and information

- ▶ The [CCES AthleteZone](#) is a hub of resources and information for athletes and their support personnel.
- ▶ The [Global DRO](#) provides athletes and support personnel with information about the prohibited status

of specific substances based on the current WADA Prohibited List.

- ▶ Physicians and medical personnel are encouraged to use the [CCES DocZone](#) for targeted medical information.
- ▶ Read more about the [Canadian Anti-Doping Program](#).
- ▶ The [World Anti-Doping Agency](#) works towards a vision of a world where all athletes compete in a doping-free sporting environment.
- ▶ The CCES is a proud and active member of the [True Sport Movement](#) — a movement that is based on the simple idea that good sport can make a great difference.

CCES E-Learning:

The CCES has developed online education modules that focus on the anti-doping program, including information about banned substances and methods, the sample collection process and the whereabouts program. E-learning can be completed at www.cces.ca and includes the following modules:

- ▶ True Sport Clean 101
- ▶ Role of Athlete Support Personnel Course.

For all National and Regional Championships, one member of the team staff must have completed the CCES E-learning modules. For teams participating in the U-17 Cup, Challenge Trophy/Jubilee Trophy and Masters Competitions, the team captain must also have completed the CCES E-learning modules.

For additional resources and more about anti-doping, please contact the CCES

Email: info@cces.ca

Call toll-free: 1-800-672-7775

Online: www.cces.ca/athletezone

Report doping via the Report Doping Hotline

Call toll-free: 1-800-710-CCES

Online: www.cces.ca/reportdoping

SECTION VI: INJURY AND RETURN TO PLAY

Emergency Action Plan

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a plan coaches and team personnel (see Safety Person) design to help them respond in a responsible and clear-headed way if an emergency occurs.

An EAP should be prepared for the facility or site where you normally hold practices and for any facility or site where you regularly host competitions. For away competitions, ask the host team or host facility for a copy of their EAP.

An EAP can be simple or elaborate. It should cover the following:

- ▶ Designate in advance who is in charge if an emergency occurs (this may be you).
- ▶ Have a cell phone with you and make sure the battery is fully charged. If this is not possible, find out the exact location of a telephone you can use at all times. Have spare change in case you need to use a pay phone.
- ▶ Have emergency telephone numbers with you (facility manager, superintendent, fire, police, ambulance), as well as athletes' contact numbers (parents/guardians, next of kin, family doctor).
- ▶ Have on hand a medical profile for each athlete so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel. Include in this profile signed consent from the parent/guardian to authorize medical treatment in an emergency.
- ▶ Prepare directions for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to follow to reach the site as quickly as possible. You may want to include information such as the closest major intersection, one-way streets, or major landmarks.
- ▶ Have a first-aid kit accessible and properly stocked at all times (all coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue first-aid training).
- ▶ Designate in advance a call person: the person who makes contact with medical authorities and otherwise assists the person in charge. Be sure that your call person can give emergency vehicles precise directions to your facility or site.

For an EAP Template, please refer to Section 13.8.

Safety Person

In addition to and in support of the Emergency Action plan, it is recommended that every team identify a member of their team personnel to serve as the "Safety Person". The Safety Person is primarily responsible for ensuring safety during all soccer-related activities, both on and off the field.

All Safety Persons should utilize a proactive, preventative approach to safety while being prepared to react in the event of accidents, injuries, or medical emergencies.

Safety Person's Responsibilities

As a Safety Person and team official you must play a leadership role in implementing effective risk management programs with your own teams, enhancing the safety of players and all involved in soccer.

The following are some responsibilities that the Safety Person should assume:

- ▶ Implement an effective risk management and safety strategy with your team that strives to prevent injuries and accidents before they happen.
- ▶ Assume a proactive role in identifying and minimizing or eliminating risks during all activities, and if ever in doubt, always err on the side of caution.
- ▶ Promote and reflect the values of Fair Play and strive to instill these values in all participants and others involved in soccer.
- ▶ Ensure that all players are provided with meaningful opportunities and enjoyable experiences free from physical and/or emotional maltreatment.
- ▶ Conduct regular checks of players' equipment to ensure proper fit, protective quality and maintenance, and advise players and parents regarding the selection or replacement of equipment.
- ▶ Conduct regular checks of team equipment to ensure it is in good condition and advise the head coach and organization if equipment requires replacement.
- ▶ Conduct a safety check of the playing facility in advance of all soccer-activities to ensure it is safe, well-maintained, and in good condition (see Section 13.9).
- ▶ Promote proper conditioning, warm-up, and cool down techniques as effective methods of injury prevention.
- ▶ Maintain accurate medical information files on all players and team officials and bring these to all team activities (see Section 13.10).
- ▶ Maintain a Player Injury Log (see Section 13.11).
- ▶ Maintain a fully stocked First Aid Kit and bring it to all team activities.
- ▶ Implement an effective Emergency Action Plan with your team and practice it regularly to ensure all involved understand their roles and are prepared to act promptly when an incident occurs.
- ▶ Recognize life-threatening and significant injuries and be prepared to deal with serious injury.
- ▶ Manage minor injuries according to basic injury management principles and refer players to medical professionals when necessary.
- ▶ Recognize injuries that require a player to be removed from action. Refer players to medical professionals and coordinate return to play.

- ▶ Promote a healthy lifestyle with all participants by being a good role model and by educating participants regarding hygiene, performance-enhancing substances, drug and alcohol abuse, nutrition and hydration.
- ▶ Facilitate communication with players, coaches, parents, physicians, therapists, paramedical personnel, officials and other volunteers regarding safety, injury prevention and player's health status.
- ▶ Act as a Safety Person for both your team and your opponents if only one Safety Person is present.

To support the responsibilities of the Safety Person, it is recommended that the identified individual have valid First Aid and CPR Training and complete the NCCP Making Headway module focusing on concussion education. In addition, templates to support the responsibilities of the Safety Person are available in Section XIII.

Injury Assessment Protocol

Under Development

Injury Management and Return to Play

Under Development

Please refer to Section 13.12 for a sample return to play letter.

Canada Soccer Concussion Policy: Players' health and safety first

Note to Provincial, Territorial and Local Soccer Organizations

As part of a pre-season concussion education strategy, we recommended:

1. Our players and parents/guardians should review as a minimum, the Summary section of this document, OR both the Respond and Recognize sections of this document (recommended) as part of their soccer registration process.
2. All participants in our sport should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the entirety of our Concussion Guidelines.

Baseline (pre-season) testing of youth (<18 years) and adult recreational athletes using any tool or combination of tools is not required for post-injury care of those who sustain a suspected or diagnosed concussion and is not recommended.

For the communication between physicians and soccer coaches, team officials and clubs we recommend using: Canada Soccer's Concussion Assessment Report, available @ canadasoccer.com.

Generic concussion reporting letters are also available through Parachute Canada: http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/injurytopics/Medical-Assessment-Letter_Parachute.pdf & http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/injurytopics/Medical-Clearance-Letter_Parachute.pdf

SUMMARY

- ▶ A concussion is a brain injury.
- ▶ All concussions should be regarded as potentially serious.
- ▶ Most concussions recover completely with correct management.
- ▶ Incorrect management of a concussion can lead to further injury.
- ▶ Concussions should be managed according to current guidelines.
- ▶ Anyone with suspected concussion following an injury must be immediately removed from playing or training and receive a prompt assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- ▶ Concussions are managed by licensed health care professionals working within their scope of practice and expertise.
- ▶ Concussions are managed by a limited period of rest followed by avoiding physical and brain activities that make concussive symptoms worse, and once concussion related symptoms have resolved, a step-wise return to school, work and sports-related activities.
- ▶ Return to education or work must take priority over return to playing soccer.
- ▶ Concussion symptoms must have completely resolved and documented medical clearance completed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner must be received before resuming full contact practice or game play.
- ▶ The recurrence of concussion symptoms subsequent to the return to full contact practice or game play requires removal from training or playing and reassessment.

CSA Concussion

The Fine Print

This policy is intended for those managing concussion in soccer at all levels. Professional and National level players typically have access to an enhanced level of medical care, which means that their concussion and their return to play can be managed in a more closely monitored way.

The Policy is based on current evidence and examples of best practice taken from soccer organizations around the world and other sports, including the Football Association, the Scottish FA, World Rugby, and the Canadian Concussion Collaborative. They are consistent with The Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport, (Toronto: Parachute, 2017) and the current Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport issued by the Fifth International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Berlin 2017. The Policy has been reviewed and is approved by Canada Soccer Sports Medicine Committee.

While this policy aims to reflect 'best practice', it must be recognized that there is a current lack of evidence with respect to their effectiveness in preventing long-term harm. Canada

Soccer Sports Medicine Committee will continue to monitor research and consensus in the area of concussion and update it policies accordingly.

This version was adopted by Canada Soccer in 2018 and should be reviewed no later than 2022.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEBSITES:

Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC): <http://sirc.ca/resources/concussion>

Coaching Association of Canada: Making Head Way Concussion eLearning Series: <https://www.coach.ca/concussion-awareness-s16361>

Parachute: www.parachutecanada.org/concussion

Concussion Awareness Training Tool: www.cattonline.com

Ontario Ministry of Health Concussion Resources:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/concussions/>

VIDEOS:

Dr. Mike Evans Health Lab — Concussions:

<https://www.reframehealthlab.com/concussions/>

RESPOND — WE ALL NEED TO PLAY A PART IN THE RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION

As Canadians, we have a heightened awareness of concussions, related to increased media coverage of this brain injury with its range of outcomes, incidents involving high profile athletes with concussion, and increasing understanding of the consequences of repetitive brain trauma, primarily within professional sports.

WHAT IS A “CONCUSSION”?

Concussion is an injury to the brain resulting in a disturbance of brain function involving thinking and behavior.

WHAT CAUSES CONCUSSION?

Concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head or an impact to the body causing rapid movement of the head.

ONSET OF SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of concussion typically appear immediately but may evolve within the first 24–48 hours.

WHO IS AT RISK?

All of our sport’s participants (players, but also team staff and officials).

Some soccer participants are at increased risk of concussion:

- ▶ Children and adolescents (18 years and under) are more susceptible to brain injury, take longer to recover, and are susceptible to rare dangerous brain complications, which may include death.
- ▶ Female soccer players have higher rates of concussion.
- ▶ Participants with previous concussion are at increased risk of further concussions — which may take longer to recover.

WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF BRAIN INJURY?

Failure to recognize and report concussive symptoms or returning to activity with ongoing concussion symptoms set the stage for:

1. Cumulative concussive injury
2. ‘Second Impact Syndrome’

Second impact syndrome is a rare occurrence. An athlete sustains a brain injury and while still experiencing symptoms (not fully recovered), sustains a second brain injury, which is associated with brain swelling and permanent brain injury or death. Brain swelling may also occur without previous trauma.

Recurrent brain injury is currently implicated in the development of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) is a progressive degenerative brain disease seen in people with a history of brain trauma. For athletes, the brain trauma has been repetitive. Originally described in deceased boxers, it now has been recognized in many sports. Symptoms include difficulty thinking, explosive and aggressive behavior, mood disorder (depression), and movement disorder (parkinsonism).

RECOGNIZE — LEARN THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION SO YOU UNDERSTAND WHEN A SOCCER PLAYER MIGHT HAVE A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION.

Everyone involved in the game (including staff, coaches, officials, players, parents and guardians of children and adolescents) should be aware of the signs, symptoms and dangers of concussion. If any of the following signs or symptoms are present following an injury the player should be suspected of having concussion and immediately removed from play or training.

“If in doubt, sit them out.”

“It is better to miss one game than the whole season.”

VISIBLE CLUES OF CONCUSSION — WHAT YOU MAY SEE:

Any one or more of the following visual clues can indicate a concussion:

- ▶ Dazed, blank or vacant look
- ▶ Lying motionless on ground / slow to get up
- ▶ Unsteady on feet / balance problems / falling over / poor coordination
- ▶ Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- ▶ Confused or not aware of play or events
- ▶ Grabbing, clutching, or shaking of the head
- ▶ Seizure
- ▶ More emotional or irritable than normal for that person
- ▶ Injury event that could have caused a concussion

SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION — WHAT YOU MAY BE TOLD BY AN INJURED PLAYER:

The presence of any one or more of the following symptoms may suggest a concussion:

- ▶ Headache or “Pressure in head”
- ▶ Dizziness or balance problems

- ▶ Mental clouding, confusion, or feeling slowed down
- ▶ Trouble seeing
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Drowsiness or feeling like “in a fog” or difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Sensitivity to light or noise
- ▶ Difficulty with reading, learning or work
- ▶ Sleep problems: getting asleep, too much or too little
- ▶ Emotional / anger / sad / anxious

The Concussion Recognition Tool 5¹ is valuable for all first responders in recognizing suspected concussion and responding to more severe brain injury or potential neck injury.

REMOVE - If a soccer player has a suspected concussion he or she must be removed from activity immediately.

Team-mates, staff, coaches, players or parents and guardians who suspect that a player may have concussion MUST work together to ensure that the player is removed from play in a safe manner.

If a neck injury is suspected the player should not be moved and should only be removed from the field of play by

CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5[®]
To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults

Supported by: FIFA, Olympic rings, FEI

RECOGNISE & REMOVE
Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is to be used for the identification of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

STEP 1: RED FLAGS -- CALL AN AMBULANCE
If there is concern after an injury including whether ANY of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from play/game/activity. If no licensed healthcare professional is available, call an ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/ burning in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS
Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma

STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- “Pressure in head”
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Fatigue or low energy
- “Don’t feel right”
- More emotional
- More irritable
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
- Neck Pain
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like “in a fog”

STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT
(IN ATHLETES OLDER THAN 12 YEARS)

Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:

- “What venue are we at today?”
- “Which half is it now?”
- “Who scored last in this game?”
- “What team did you play last week/game?”
- “Did your team win the last game?”

Athletes with suspected concussion should:

- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreational/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

The CRT5 may be freely copied in its current form for distribution to individuals, teams, groups and organisations. Any revision and any reproduction in a digital form requires approval by the Concussion in Sport Group. It should not be altered in any way, rebranded or sold for commercial gain.

ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE

© Concussion in Sport Group 2017

¹Echemendia RJ, et al. Br J Sports Med 2017;51:872. © Concussion in Sport Group 2017

emergency healthcare professionals with appropriate spinal care training. Call 911. Activate your emergency action plan.

More severe forms of brain injury may be mistaken for concussion. If ANY of the following are observed or reported within 48 hours of an injury, then the player should be transported for urgent medical assessment at the nearest hospital (symptoms below). Call 911. Activate your emergency action plan.

- ▶ Neck pain or tenderness
- ▶ Deteriorating consciousness (more drowsy)
- ▶ Increasing confusion or irritability
- ▶ Severe or increasing headache
- ▶ Repeated vomiting
- ▶ Unusual behavior change
- ▶ Seizure
- ▶ Double vision
- ▶ Weakness or tingling / burning in arms or legs

Anyone with a suspected concussion should not:

- ▶ be left alone until they have been assessed medically
- ▶ consume alcohol or recreational drugs in the first 24 hours, and thereafter should avoid alcohol or recreational drugs until free of all concussion symptoms
- ▶ drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner

RE-ENTRY — A licensed healthcare professional with expertise in the evaluation and management of head injury and concussions may review a player with suspected concussion at field side.

A player who has been removed from play who reports NO concussion symptoms and NO visual clues of a concussion can be returned to play. Any such player should be monitored for delayed symptoms, which may appear over the next 24-48 hours. If there is any doubt whether a player has sustained a concussion, they should be removed from play and undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

REFER — Once removed from play, the player with suspected concussion must be referred to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner with training in the evaluation and management of head injury and concussions.

All cases of suspected concussion require referral to medical doctors or nurse practitioners for diagnosis, even if the symptoms resolve.

In geographic regions of Canada with limited access to medical doctors (rural or northern communities), a licensed healthcare professional [i.e. nurse] with support from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner can provide this diagnostic evaluation.

Report — Communication between players, parents, team staff, and their health care providers is vital for the welfare of the player.

Players, parents and guardians must disclose the nature of, and status of all active injuries (including concussions) to coaches and team staff.

Players need to be responsible for one another and encourage the disclosure of concussion symptoms.

For children and adolescents with suspected concussion who have not been directly transferred for medical management, coaches must communicate their concerns directly with the parents or guardians.

RECOVER — Avoiding physical and brain activities that make concussive symptoms worse is the cornerstone of current concussion management.

The management of a concussion involves an initial limited period (<24-48 hours) of physical and brain rest.

Stage 1 of the Return-to-Soccer Strategy (see Return to Soccer Strategy, page 12) involves avoiding or limiting physical and brain activities that make concussive symptoms worse.

Once concussion related symptoms have resolved, the player may start Stage 2 and continue to proceed to the next level when he/she completes the stage without a recurrence of concussion-related symptoms.

In conjunction with your school and educational professionals and health care provider, recommendations will be made about whether it is appropriate to take time away from school, or whether returning to school should be done in a graded fashion, this is called “*return to learn*”.

Your health care provider will also make recommendations about whether it is appropriate to take time away from work, or whether returning to work should be done in a graded fashion, this is called “*return to work*”.

RETURN TO PLAY

Players who have been removed from play and referred for medical assessment for a suspected concussion who provide a completed Concussion Assessment Medical Report that is signed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner which documents NO active concussion may participate in training sessions and game play.

Players who have been removed from play and referred for assessment for a suspected concussion who provide a completed Concussion Assessment Medical Report that is signed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner which documents a concussion diagnosis may participate in training sessions (Stage 3 and 4) within the Return-to-Soccer Strategy (next page), once they or their parents/guardians report NO concussion symptoms and successfully completing Stage 2 (15 minutes of light aerobic activity).

Players who have concluded Stage 4 within a Return-to-Soccer Strategy who provide a second completed Concussion Assessment Medical Report that is signed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner which documents recovered concussion may participate in full contact training sessions (Stage 5) and subsequently, game play within the Return-to-Soccer Strategy (next page), if they remain clear of concussion symptoms.

RETURN TO SOCCER STRATEGY

Depending on the severity and type of the symptoms, players may progress through the following stages at different rates. Stages 2-4 should each take a minimum of 24 hours in adults, and longer in those 18 years and under.

If the player experiences new symptoms or worsening symptoms at any stage, they should go back to the previous stage and attempt to progress again after being free of concussion-related symptoms for 24 hours or seek medical attention.

	EXERCISE ALLOWED	% MAX HEART RATE	DURATION	OBJECTIVE
STAGE 0 REST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Rest ▶ NO activities 	No training	<1-2 days	Rest
STAGE 1 SYMPTOM LIMITED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms. 		Until concussion symptoms clear	Recovery Symptom free
STAGE 2 LIGHT EXERCISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Walking, light jogging, swimming or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. ▶ NO soccer ▶ NO resistance training, weight lifting, jumping or hard running 	<70%	<15 min	Increase heart rate.
STAGE 3 SOCCER-SPECIFIC EXERCISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Simple movement (ie running drills) ▶ Limiting body and head movements. ▶ NO head impact activities. ▶ NO heading. 	<80%	<45 min	Add movement.
STAGE 4 NON-CONTACT TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Progression to more complex training activities with increased intensity ▶ Coordination and attention e.g. passing, change of direction, shooting, small-sided game ▶ May start resistance training ▶ NO head impact activities ▶ NO heading ▶ Goalkeeping activities should avoid diving and any risk of the head being hit by a ball 	<90%	<60 min	Exercise, coordination, skills/tactics.
Youth (<18 years) and adult student-athletes have returned to full-time school activities at this time				
Repeat medical assessment with second Concussion Assessment Medical Report				
STAGE 5 FULL CONTACT PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Normal training activities ie tackling, heading diving saves 	<100%		Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff.
STAGE 6 GAME PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Normal game play. 	<100%		Player rehabilitated

REASSESS— A player with prolonged concussion recovery (>4 weeks for youth athletes, >2 weeks for adult athletes), or recurrent or complicated concussions, should be assessed and managed by a medical doctor with experience in sports-related concussions, working within a multidisciplinary team.

SECTION VII: FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY

In soccer, the grounds and facilities need to be appropriate and the equipment needs to be in good condition for the well-being and safety of the participants. It is extremely important that the soccer field is in good condition otherwise it will increase the risk of injuries. For example, a soccer game played on an uneven field with holes will increase the likelihood of players rolling an ankle, losing balance and colliding with another player, or even falling hard to the ground.

To enhance safe participation, it is important to:

- ▶ Check and maintain the surface of the field to remove hazards
- ▶ Replace balls once their water-resistant qualities are lost
- ▶ Use appropriate sized balls for the age and gender of players

A sample Field Inspection Sheet for use in assessing and reporting the quality of the field is included in Section 13.9.

Portable Goal Safety

Too many serious injuries and fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in soccer must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future.

- ▶ For safety reasons goalposts of any size (including those which are portable and not installed permanently at a pitch or practice field) must always be anchored securely to the ground.
- ▶ Portable goalposts must be secured by the use of chain anchors or appropriate anchor weights to prevent them from toppling forward.
- ▶ It is essential that under no circumstances children or adults should be allowed to climb, swing on, or play with the structures of the goalposts.
- ▶ Particular attention is drawn to the fact that if not properly assembled and secured, portable goalposts may topple over.
- ▶ Portable goalposts should not be left in place after use. They should be dismantled and removed to a place of secure storage.
- ▶ It is strongly recommended that nets should only be secured by plastic hooks or tape and not by metal cup hooks. Any metal cup hooks should if possible be removed and replaced. New goalposts should not be purchased if they include metal cup hooks which cannot be replaced.
- ▶ Goalposts which are “home-made”, or which have been altered from their original size or construction should not be used. These have been the cause of a number of deaths and injuries.

- ▶ Guidelines to prevent toppling: Follow manufacturer’s guide-lines in assembling goalposts. Before use, Coaches should test the goals following the guidelines below:
 - ▶ Ensure each goal is anchored securely in its place
 - ▶ Exert a significant downward force on the cross bar
 - ▶ Exert a significant backward force on both upright posts
 - ▶ Exert a significant forward force on both upright posts

Blood

An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the game until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition.

Jewelry

Players are not permitted to wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. NO jewelry: that includes rings, bracelets (except medical alert bracelets — which must be either made of Velcro or similar soft material, or covered with a sweatband), earrings, necklaces, other visible body piercing, etc. The practice of taping jewelry is not acceptable.

Headscarf and Turban

At its meeting on October 2, 2012, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) approved the amendments Law 4 –The Players’ Equipment (“headscarf”). The decision of the IFAB regarding the use of headscarves comes into effect immediately.

IFAB Decision:

As outlined in Law 4 of the FIFA Laws of the Game, where head covers (excluding goalkeepers’ caps) are worn, they must:

- ▶ be black or the same main colour as the shirt (provided that the players of the same team wear the same colour)
- ▶ be in keeping with the professional appearance of the player’s equipment • not be attached to the shirt
- ▶ not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player (e.g. opening/closing mechanism around neck)
- ▶ not have any part(s) extending out from the surface (protruding elements)

Other headscarves are also permitted provided the above criteria are met.

Players Wearing Casts Policy

This policy is designed to reduce inconsistencies in rulings over players wearing casts. All referees are expected to follow these policies in all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer

Law 4 states that a player may not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous [to anyone].

It further states that non-dangerous protective equipment is permitted as long as it has the sole purpose of protecting the individual physically, providing it poses no danger to the individual or any other player.

Modern protective equipment made of soft, lightweight, padded materials are not considered dangerous and are therefore permitted.

Hard casts are considered to pose a danger to both the wearer and other players and are not permitted to be worn. The practice of padding a hard cast does not reduce the element of danger.

Players wearing a soft cast will be permitted to play if the cast does not present a danger to the individual or any other player.

The referee or Supervisor of Officials (if one has been appointed to the match/tournament) will make the final decision as to the acceptability of any cast.

Any player who uses a cast with the intent to intimidate or injure an opponent shall be sent off.

Player Insulin Pump Policy

This policy is designed to reduce inconsistencies in rulings over players with diabetes who wear an insulin pump. All referees are expected to follow these policies in all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer.

An insulin pump is designed to ensure that the player maintains a proper blood glucose level during the game. An extended period without infusion of insulin may result in hyperglycemia (excess sugar in the blood).

Law 4 states that a player may not use equipment that is dangerous to him/herself or another player. This is further expanded upon in the interpretations of the Laws of the Game whereby it is advised that player may use equipment that has the sole purpose of protecting the individual physically providing that it poses no danger to the individual or any other player.

A player wearing an insulin pump because of a medical condition is permitted to play providing he/she has received written medical clearance and is able to provide the referee with a note indicating such. The pump itself must not present a danger to the individual or any other player.

Lightning Safety/Severe Weather

When thunder roars, go indoors!

The safety of players, coaches, management, and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer. By understanding and following the below information, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Ultimately, the referee has the final say over delaying or restarting a match due to weather. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Referees are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during matches they are controlling.

If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning. As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

Additional Information

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

- ▶ **To plan for a safe day, check the weather forecast first.** If thunderstorms are forecast, avoid being outdoors at that time or make an alternate plan. Identify safe places and determine how long it will take you to reach them.
- ▶ **Watch the skies for developing thunderstorms and listen for thunder.** As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. If you can hear thunder, you are in danger of being hit by lightning. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one.
- ▶ **Get to a safe place.** A safe location is a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect you from lightning. If no sturdy building is close by, get into a metal-roofed vehicle and close all the windows.
- ▶ **Do not handle electrical equipment, telephones or plumbing.** These are all electrical conductors. Using a computer or wired video game system, taking a bath or touching a metal window frame all put you at risk of being struck by lightning. Use battery-operated appliances only.
- ▶ **If caught outdoors far from shelter, stay away from tall objects.** This includes trees, poles, wires and fences. Take shelter in a low-lying area but be on the alert for possible flooding.

Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer.

When larger groups are involved, the time needed to properly evacuate an area increases. As time requirements change, the distance at which lightning is noted and considered a threat to move into the area must be increased.

Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location. Safe structure or location is defined as:

- ▶ Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and / or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.

In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. Do not touch the sides of any vehicle!

If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. Minimize your body’s surface area and the ground! Do not lie flat! If unable to reach safe shelter, stay away from

the tallest trees or objects such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.

Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

When considering resumption of any athletics activity, wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field.

First aid for lightning victims

Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.

- ▶ Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge and can be safely handled.
- ▶ Call for help. Victims may be suffering from burns or shock and should receive medical attention immediately. Call 9-1-1 or your local ambulance service.
- ▶ Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Use an automatic external defibrillator if one is available.

For additional information the following websites are helpful:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/lightning/safety/overview.html>

www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/lightning

SECTION VIII: ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Anti-Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. Canada Soccer is committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all participants.

Preventing and reporting bullying and cyber-bullying are core elements of the Respect Training outlined in Section 13.13.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Although some elements of bullying are included in the Canada Soccer Code of Ethics and Conduct and can be considered a form of harassment, a more specific definition is as follows:

Bullying is the severe or repeated use of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another individual that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. causing physical or emotional harm to the other person or damage to the other person's property;
2. placing the other person in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. creating a hostile environment for the other person at any soccer activity;
4. infringing on the rights of the other person at any soccer activity; or
5. materially and substantially disrupting the orderly operation of any soccer activity

The objectives of the Anti-Bullying Policy are:

1. To make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated in any form.
2. To define bullying and educate all coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents about the types of behaviour that constitute bullying.
3. To inform all coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents that there is a policy and protocol, should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make clear the responsibility of the organization and coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents to report bullying.
5. To spread the word that bullying is taken seriously and that all athletes can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, team personnel, or board member.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied should do one or more of the following things:

- ▶ Talk to their parents;
- ▶ Talk to a coach, Board member, or other designated individual;
- ▶ Write a letter or email to a coach, Board member, or other designated individual;
- ▶ Make a report to their Provincial/Territorial Soccer Organization.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate organizational leadership as quickly as possible to stop the bullying behaviour as soon as possible and to make sure that memories are fresh, and behaviour can be accurately recalled.

HOW TO HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the children involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the children involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behaviour when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at the organization or it is reported to be occurring at our organization, address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN INVOLVED using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. First, we get the facts.
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and children, and gather all available information regarding the circumstances under which the incident occurred.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
2. Then, determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviours that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
 - a. Review the definition of bullying;
 - b. To determine if the behaviour is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - i. What is the history between the children involved?

- ii. Have there been past conflicts?
- iii. Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength and can include things like the “popularity” of the children involved.
- iv. Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some children who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behaviour
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the children involved.

SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN INVOLVED

1. Support the children who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the organization and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

2. Address bullying behaviour

- a. Make sure the child who engaged in the bullying behaviour understands why his or her behaviour is unacceptable. Young people who bully must learn their behaviour is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show children that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or to make fun of someone who is different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times children act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These children may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the children who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:

- i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
- ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the organization, or for others in your community.
- iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don’t work or have negative consequences:
 - i. Zero tolerance or “or three strikes, you’re out” are generally unsuccessful strategies. Young people may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - ii. Similarly, conflict resolution and peer mediation often don’t work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset children who have been bullied.
 - f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.
- 3. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, children witness bullying. They want to help, but don’t know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening:
 - a. Be a friend to the person being bullied.
 - b. Tell a trusted adult — a parent, coach or board member.
 - c. Help the children being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let’s go, practice is about to start.”
 - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
 - e. Don’t give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

For a Sample Anti-Bullying Policy, please refer to Section 13.13.

Change Room

Organizations, facility providers, and those with responsibility for children and young people have a general duty of care towards them; however, there are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities.

This information is; therefore, intended as a practical guidance to support individuals and organizations to consider issues relevant to their particular context; and to develop and implement policies and procedures that provide a safe environment for children and young people.

Type of facility

A major consideration in establishing a safe use policy for changing facilities is whether or not the facilities will be used exclusively by children's and youth teams or athletes. Typically, this would be the case only if an organization owns or manages its own facility or has negotiated sole use of a more public facility at a particular time. The advantage of this type of arrangement is that it negates any concerns arising from children mixing with adults when changing or showering.

Many changing facilities are also used by other adults (other teams, individual athletes, or members of the public). In these circumstances there is a need for additional steps to be taken to ensure adequate supervision of the children while changing. This will avoid risks associated with mixed-facility use and to prevent or reduce opportunities for unwanted contact between the young people and these adults when changing or showering. It is important for staff/volunteers to balance the need for adequate supervision with the need to ensure children are afforded appropriate levels of privacy.

All facilities should also have a safeguarding policy and procedures for reporting any concerns and staff/volunteers are advised to familiarize themselves with these at the outset.

Issues to consider and address

Adults using the changing rooms at the same time as children

Ideally groups of children and young people should have sole use of changing facilities. This obviates any risks and potential vulnerability associated with mixing with adults or other young people (known or unknown to them) when changing and showering. Even when using public facilities, arrangements can be considered to address any potential concerns:

- ▶ there may be a separate room/facility available for the group
- ▶ it may be possible to negotiate specific time slots for the group to have exclusive use of the changing rooms
- ▶ a team area within the changing facility could be designated and nobody else allowed in that area
- ▶ children and young people may opt to change at home before they arrive for the activity*

*Remember that many children and young people are very self-conscious and anxious about undressing in front of others. Staff/volunteers should consider offering the option of changing at home as a matter of course.

If mixed use of the changing facility is unavoidable, then at least two members of staff (of the same gender as the children) should supervise the group. It is important that staff/volunteers seek to balance the need for adult supervision with the rights of children to privacy in this context.

Supervision in the changing facility may also be necessary when:

- ▶ children are too young to be left alone or change themselves. Organizers of groups of children under eight years should make arrangements for their supervision while changing before and after the

activity. Although most children of school age (four years old) may be capable of changing their clothes, many leisure facilities have established guidelines that any child below the age of eight years must be accompanied.

- ▶ the group includes children with disabilities who require additional support and assistance with changing (note this should be undertaken by prior agreement with their parent or professional carer)
- ▶ children could injure themselves or access a potential risk such as a swimming pool that is unattended
- ▶ there are concerns about bullying, fighting, or other troublesome behaviours taking place which need to be managed.

Who should supervise?

If you have decided that the children and young people need supervision, staff/volunteers should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should be given to ensuring that those undertaking this task have been properly screened as being suitable to do so.

- ▶ Numbers — organizers are recommended to implement the "Rule of Two" and have more than one adult supervising. In addition to protecting both the children and adults, this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away.
- ▶ Gender — children should be supervised by staff/volunteers of the same gender while changing.
- ▶ Timing — by agreeing to a very clear timetable for use of the changing facilities by children, the supervising adults, and any coaches or officials respectively, the risks associated to any extended contact between the adults and children are minimized.

Carry out safe recruitment practices including:

1. criminal records check for individuals whose roles make them eligible to supervise children by virtue of their role meeting the current definition of regulated activity
2. references — these should include a reference from a recent, previous employer/organization where they have worked with children/young people
3. role description — providing clear details about the boundaries of their role
4. code of conduct — a document that individuals sign that clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of staff/volunteers.

Parents as supervisors

Parents are often involved in supervising children during sports activities and can provide valuable support to organizers and coaches. Where they are responsible only for their own child (or by agreement their relatives' or friends' child/ren) this constitutes a private arrangement outside the responsibility of the activity organizers. However, when

parents undertake a formal supervisory role at the request of or with the agreement of the organizer which includes having responsibility for other people’s children, the same steps should be taken to establish their suitability as for any other supervisory position (as outlined above).

Many sports operate mixed gender teams at several age group levels and arrangements to enable the groups to change separately should always be made. Solutions may include:

- ▶ each gender using a different room or facility
- ▶ each gender having a distinct time slot
- ▶ everybody changing at home before they leave
- ▶ each gender having an allocated area of a larger shared facility

USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The use of such devices in changerooms is prohibited.

For additional information on photography in changerooms, please refer to Photography.

For additional information on Canada Soccer’s commitment to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment as it pertains to changerooms, please refer to the Canada Soccer Guide to Accessibility and Inclusiveness.

For a Sample Changeroom Policy, please refer to Section 13.14.

Travel

During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks and the setting, including changerooms, training and competition facilities, vehicles, and hotel rooms, is less structured and familiar. The purpose of a Travel Policy is to establish standards of behaviour and manage expectations of the organization as well as coaches and team personnel, players, and parents. Some important considerations when developing a Travel Policy include:

- ▶ Coaches, team personnel, and athletes must abide by the Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics as well as the Organization’s Code(s) of Conduct at all times.
- ▶ The Travel Policy should establish additional guidelines for safety and behaviour, as necessary.
- ▶ Coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents should be provided with a copy of the Travel Policy in advance of traveling with a team.
- ▶ All coaches and team personnel must be registered members and properly screened in advance of traveling with a team.
- ▶ The “Rule of Two” must always be adhered to during travel, meaning that no coach or team personnel should ever be alone with an athlete unless the coach or team personnel is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that athlete.

- ▶ Room checks, and team meetings and other activities must maintain the “Rule of Two” and should be conducted in an open and observable environment whenever possible.
- ▶ Athletes should not ride in a coach’s vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete.
- ▶ During overnight team travel, if athletes room with other athletes they must be of the same gender and should be a similar age.
- ▶ There should be no male athletes in female athlete’s rooms and no female athletes in male athlete’s rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- ▶ Coaches and team personnel must not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete unless the coach or team personnel is a parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that athlete.
- ▶ Coaches and team personnel (including chaperones) should stay in rooms nearby to athletes and provide athletes with room numbers in case of emergency.
- ▶ Curfews should be established by the team and/or organization for each day of the trip.
- ▶ Athletes should remain with the team at all times during the trip unless permission is granted to leave the team by a coach or team personnel.
- ▶ When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc., athletes should stay in groups of no less than three people. Groups of athletes under the age of 12 should be accompanied by an adult.

For a Sample Travel Policy, please refer to Section 13.15.

Electronic Communication and Social Media

With the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world, for many organizations, coaches, and athletes this is their primary method of communication. While the value of these methods of communication is acknowledged, it must also be recognized that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

Appropriate electronic communications and social media use as well as preventing and reporting cyber-bullying are core elements of the Respect Training outlined in Section IV.

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics as well as the Organization’s Code(s) of Conduct.

Some guiding principles for communication between adults and minors include the following:

- ▶ Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?
- ▶ Is this something I would be comfortable saying out

loud to the intended recipient of my communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, other coaching staff, or other athletes?

- ▶ Is this something I would be comfortable with if it were on the front page of my local newspaper?
- ▶ Electronic communications between adults and minors should always be Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered part of the Organization's records. Another coach or parent must be included in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a coach.

FACEBOOK AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches and Team Personnel may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the organization join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete, and the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

If the organization has an official Facebook page, athletes and their parents can "friend" the Club for information and updates on team-related matters.

TWITTER

Best Practice: The Organization has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter.

Alternative Option: Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter. In addition, coaches may wish to consider separating personal and professional social media accounts. While professional accounts may be helpful in sharing information relating to the team, depending on how social media is used and views being expressed, it may not be desirable or appropriate for athletes to follow a coach's personal account.

TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes only for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. As outlined above, texts between adults and minors should always be Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach or team personnel must also be copied.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

For a Sample Electronic Communication Policy, please refer to Section 13.16.

Photography

Parents and young people generally welcome opportunities to celebrate or publicize their involvement and achievements when taking part in sport by photographing children at events. Sports organizations may also want to promote their activities to encourage participation.

For these reasons, Canada Soccer does not advocate the banning of photography or the use of images and videos of children.

This guidance will help organizations ensure they are taking all necessary steps to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of their images in resources and media publications, on the internet and elsewhere.

What are the risks?

Children may be identified, contacted or groomed

Including the child's personal information (full name, address) alongside their image can make them identifiable and therefore vulnerable to individuals looking to locate, contact or 'groom' children for abuse. Even if personal details are kept confidential, other details identifying the sports organization, school or club, or their favourite sportsperson or team, can also be used to groom the child.

There's increased risk of identification of, and contact with, a child:

- ▶ by someone in circumstances where there are legal restrictions — such as if the child is in local-authority care or placed with an adoptive family
- ▶ where it's potentially dangerous to reveal the child's whereabouts to an estranged parent due to previous concerns about domestic violence

Someone might make inappropriate or illegal images of children

Photo or video content may itself be inappropriate, or images may be used inappropriately or out of context. Some individuals deliberately target sports activities and set out to take inappropriate photos in ways that are potentially illegal and harmful, such as:

- ▶ images of children changing
- ▶ photos taken in washrooms
- ▶ images that appear ambiguous can be used inappropriately and out of context by others (for example, images from some angles of athletes participating in sport)
- ▶ images can easily be copied and edited, perhaps to create child-abuse images
- ▶ images shared privately online can be re-shared, possibly entering the public domain on websites or social media

Using images of young people for publication, promotion or coaching

Organizations benefit from using images of young participants to promote and celebrate activities, events and competitions. Some coaches also find it helpful to use photographs or videos as a tool to support a young athlete's skill development; however, the use of photos and videos on websites and social media, and in posters, the press or other publications, can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people if not managed correctly.

Organizations wishing to use or permit the use of images of children involved in their activities must have a policy in place to safeguard them. They also need to consider whether parental permission for photography should be sought and take storage and privacy considerations and additional concerns about young athletes into account.

Minimizing the risks

- ▶ think carefully before using any images showing children and young people on your website, social media or other publications
- ▶ choose images that present the activity in a positive light, and promote the best aspects of the sport and organization
- ▶ don't supply full names of children along with the images, unless:
 - ▶ it's considered necessary — such as for elite young athletes
 - ▶ it's in the child's best interests
 - ▶ the child and parent have consented
- ▶ only use images of children in suitable dress or kit, including recommended safety wear such as shin pads
- ▶ avoid images and camera angles that may be more prone to misinterpretation or misuse than others

- ▶ consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity, rather than the children who are actually involved in it
- ▶ provide coaches who use images of athletes as part of their training with clear guidelines by which they are required to comply, including: use of the images, consents, and retention, safe storage and confidentiality

Using official or professional photographers

Organizations should establish and clarify many of these points as part of the commissioning or contracting process:

- ▶ inform parents and children that a photographer will be in attendance
- ▶ ensure parents and children consent to both the taking and publication of films or photos
- ▶ check the photographer's identity, the validity of their role, and the purpose and use of the images to be taken
- ▶ issue the photographer identification, which must be worn at all times
- ▶ provide the photographer with a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of image content and their behaviour
- ▶ clarify areas where all photography is prohibited (washrooms, changing areas, first aid areas, etc.)
- ▶ inform the photographer about how to identify — and avoid taking images of — children without the required parental consent for photography
- ▶ don't allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events
- ▶ don't allow photo sessions away from the event — for instance, at a young person's home.
- ▶ clarify issues about ownership of and access to all images, and for how long they'll be retained and/or used

Responding to concerns

All staff, volunteers, children, and parents should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography (in terms of the way, by whom, or where photography is being undertaken), these should be reported to the event organizer or another official.

There must be a safeguarding procedure in place to ensure that reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child-protection issue. If there are concerns or suspicions about potentially criminal behaviour this should include referral to the police.

When to seek parental permission

Close-up images

- ▶ Seek parents' consent to take and use images of individual or smaller groups of participants in which their child would easily be recognisable.

- ▶ Let parents know how, where, and in what context an image may be used — for example, on a public website, through social media, or in a printed resource.
- ▶ Make parents aware of your policy on using children’s images, and of the way these represent the organization or activity
- ▶ complete a parental consent form for use of images of children, possibly as part of the process for registering and consenting the child’s participation in the activity or event

General images of events

At many events, organizers will wish to take wide-angle, more general images of the event, the site, opening and closing ceremonies, etc. It’s usually not reasonable, practical or proportionate to secure consent for every participating child in order to take such images, or to preclude such photography on the basis of the concerns of a small number of parents. In these circumstances, organizers should make clear to all participants and parents that these kinds of images will be taken, and for what purposes.

What to do when parental consent is not given

Organizers have a responsibility to put in place arrangements to ensure that any official or professional photographers can identify (or be informed about) which children should not be subject to close-up photography.

This could involve providing some type of recognizable badge, sticker or wrist band, and/or a system for photographers to check with the activity organizer and/or coach or team personnel to ensure it is clear which groups or individuals should not feature in images.

Secure storage of images

Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely:

- ▶ hard copies of images should be kept in a locked drawer
- ▶ electronic images should be in a protected folder with restricted access
- ▶ images should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones

Avoid using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children — use only cameras or devices belonging to your organization.

If you’re storing and using photographs to identify children and adults for official purposes — such as identity cards — ensure you comply with the legal requirements for handling personal information.

Photography by parents and spectators at events

Most spectators — especially competitors’ family and friends — will want to take photos or videos at sports events.

Organizations responsible for sports and activity events must have a photography policy and procedures in place to safeguard children. As part of their planning process, they’ll need to factor in any additional facility or venue policies, as well as determine what stance to take on when photography by the public is allowed.

Although parental consent is not required for photography by the public, event organizers should make the photography policy clear to all participants and parents ahead of the event.

Minimizing the risks

- ▶ Decide on a spectator photography policy during the planning stages of the event:
 - ▶ a total ban on any photography
 - ▶ registration of individuals who intend to take photos
 - ▶ no overall public photography ban for the event
 - ▶ the event venue is a public area, so no ban is possible
- ▶ clarify and promote the photography rules for the event to all staff, volunteers, spectators, parents, and young participants
 - ▶ in these rules, include areas where photography is banned
- ▶ warn parents and spectators that there can be negative consequences to sharing images linked to information about their own or other people’s children on social media (Facebook, Twitter) — and care should be taken about ‘tagging’
- ▶ establish procedures to respond to and manage any concerns arising, including clear reporting structures and a system to contact police when necessary

Recruitment and Scouting

Policies for Recruiters

- ▶ All College and University recruiters should provide advance notification of their attendance to the event organizers via e-mail.
- ▶ All registered scouts should receive accreditation and information packages upon their arrival at the competition.
- ▶ Upon receiving consent from a coach or team administrator, recruiters can approach players at the completion of a match. Any approach made to a player must be in the presence of a coach, team administrator, or parent/guardian.
- ▶ Once an athlete has formally committed to a club, college or university, that individual is no longer available to be recruited by other clubs or institutions.