

Generic Section

Background

This document is a revision of the 1999 version of the Physical Education Interschool Safety Guidelines. These 2017 Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines (Safety Guidelines) were developed with the support and encouragement of the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea), the Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), the Ontario Association for the Support of Physical and Health Educators (OASPHE), the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA), and the Canadian Intramural Recreation Association-Ontario (CIRA). The Elementary Interschool module of the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines was developed to support The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, 2015 (revised). This particular Generic Section pertains to the Interschool module of the Safety Guidelines and is based on the Curricular and Intramural Safety Guidelines modules.

Intent of the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines:

The primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with the school board and its employees. An important aspect in fulfilling this role is to recognize that there is an element of risk in all physical activity and to take action accordingly. To this end, the safety guidelines writing team and physical educators across Ontario have identified and analyzed reasonable foreseeable risks and have developed these guidelines to reflect a consensus among qualified persons about procedures that help minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the risk of a preventable accident or injury. A guideline alone does not eliminate risk regardless of how well it is written or how effectively it is implemented. Safety awareness, practised by the coach, based on up-to-date information, common sense observation, action, and foresight, is the key to safe programming. The intent of the Interschool Safety Guidelines is to provide a reference document that will assist the coach to focus on safe instructional practices for each sport in order to minimize the inherent element of risk. By implementing safe instructional practices, such as use of logical skill progressions, as well as inclusion of appropriate drills and strategies in preparation for competition, the coach will guard against foreseeable risks. It is hoped that through this implementation process, this document will assist coaches in fulfilling their obligation to provide the safest possible environment in which all students, regardless of physical, mental, emotional abilities/challenges or cultural background, can compete.

Impact and Scope of this document:

The Safety Guidelines statements represent the minimum standards for risk management practices for school boards. An activity must not occur unless these statements have been addressed.

The document sets out minimum guidelines to be used by coaches and administrators in addressing the safety component of interschool athletics. Interschool athletics is defined as the school-sponsored, competitive program which:

- occurs outside the athlete's instructional time;
- involves a selected school team/group;
- involves a competition against another outside team/group.

Curricular and Intramural Guidelines can be found in their respective modules.

Risk Management:

The following elements of risk must be taken into consideration by the teacher/coach:

- The competition is age-appropriate for the athletes' physical/mental abilities and behavioural patterns.
- The coach/supervisor has the knowledge/experience and certification (where applicable) in accordance with the safety guidelines to coach/supervise the activity safely.
- In addition to the supervision ratios outlined in the safety guidelines, the activity must meet Board standards for physical activity supervision ratios.
- Consideration must be given to environmental factors (e.g., extreme weather causing change

to site being used [e.g., extreme change in wind conditions at cross country running practice requires change in practice location]).

A. Generic Issues

Please Note:

- All statements in the Safety Guidelines are minimum standards.
- The following statements in the Generic Section of the Safety Guidelines are not listed in any order of priority.
- Lists of examples in the Safety Guidelines are not exclusive.
- Interschool guidelines must be applied to all student activities in practice and competition.

There are many common guidelines for safety which apply to all interschool athletics. Some such commonalities are:

1. Each school must appoint a teacher or administrator who is responsible for the interschool athletic program, to determine that each coach is familiar with the school board's coaching philosophy and relevant documents.

2. **Coaching Qualifications and Expectations**

All new coaches must go through an approval process by school administrator/designate to determine the individual's ability to coach the activity. Check that the individual has the knowledge, experience and, where appropriate, qualifications (e.g. higher risk sports) to safely coach the activity.

Volunteer Coaches must go through a formalized application process and approval system by school administrator/designate. Refer to Appendix Q.

All coaches must be knowledgeable and implement the expectations for coaches as outlined in B. Introduction to Sport - Activity Page Components - #8. Coach's Role and Responsibilities.

All coaches must be familiar with and implement where applicable the criteria outlined in Coaching Expectations - Appendix O.

3. Prior to the athlete's first practice, parents need to be made aware of the risks inherent in sport participation (refer to Part A of Appendix A) and must sign and return an Interschool Athletic Participation Form (refer to Part B of Appendix A).
4. **Medical Conditions:** Prior to the athletes' first practice, coaches need to be aware of the medical background and physical limitations of their team-tryout members. This includes knowledge of students with heart disorders, asthma, diabetes, severe allergies, anaphylaxis, previous concussion etc. Each school needs to develop a process by which this medical information is shared with the coach. **The coach must have student athletes' medical information available at all practices and all games** (refer to Appendix A).

To address an athlete's medical condition (e.g., asthma, life threatening allergies, diabetes, epilepsy, heart disorders) coaches are to refer to their school board's/school's medical condition protocols and/or individualized student medical information form.

To assist coaches with the management of a student with asthma when participating in physical activity Ophea has developed a Sample Management of Asthma Protocol (Appendix L).

5. **Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome (SADS)** refers to a variety of cardiac disorders which are often genetic and undiagnosed that can be responsible for sudden death in young, apparently healthy people. For more information visit www.sads.ca.

Because physical activity is a common trigger for many sudden cardiac deaths, it is important for coaches to recognize possible symptoms/warning signs.

- fainting or seizure during physical activity
- fainting or seizure resulting from emotional excitement, emotional distress or being startled (e.g. a sudden loud noise such as a school fire alarm system)

School response:

- Immediately call 911.
- Inform parents and provide information about SADS - www.sads.ca
- The student is not to participate in physical activity until cleared by a medical assessment and documentation is provided to the school administrator/designate.

Refer to Appendix M for school and parent information and responsibility and a sample form to be completed for return to activity after a fainting episode.

6. Follow the school's emergency action plan including accessibility to a vehicle for transportation of an athlete to hospital (refer to Appendix E). For first aid coverage for Lower and Higher Risk activities, refer to #29 of within this section.
7. An appropriately-stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. When activities are offered off campus, an appropriate portable first aid kit must be readily accessible. For a sample listing of first aid items, refer to Appendix D.
8. Universal precautions (e.g., using impermeable gloves) must be followed when dealing with situations involving blood and other bodily fluids (refer to Appendix K). Coaches must refer to their Board and other policies that address blood and bodily fluid procedures (e.g., sport governing body, association regulations).
9. **Concussion Protocol and Procedures Information**

The Ministry of Education expects all boards in Ontario to develop and maintain a policy on concussion. In accordance with *PPM 158 School Board Policies on Concussions*, school board policy on concussion is expected to contain, at a minimum, the following:

- Development of Awareness;
- Prevention;
- Identification;
- Management Procedures for a Diagnosed Concussion; and
- Training and a process to support ongoing implementation and compliance.

The Ministry of Education considers the concussion protocol outlined in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines to be the minimum standard. School boards may localize the components of the concussion protocol, to meet the specific needs of their school district, keeping in mind that they can raise the minimum standards but cannot lower the standards. Although it is important to be familiar with the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guideline Concussion Protocol, educators must ensure that they use their own board's concussion protocol. To assist in the development of concussion safety protocols and procedures, administrators, teachers and coaches are to reference the appropriate concussion information located in the Appendices section of this module. Refer to list below.

- Appendix C-1 - Concussion Protocol: Prevention, Identification and Management Procedures
- Appendix C-2 - Sample Tool to Identify a Suspected Concussion
- Appendix C-3 - Sample Documentation of Medical Examination
- Appendix C-4 - Sample Documentation for a Diagnosed Concussion - Return to Learn/Return to Physical Activity Plan
- Appendix C-5 - Sample Concussion Prevention Strategies

10. If an athlete misses a practice/game due to an injury or illness requiring professional medical attention (e.g., medical doctor, chiropractor, physiotherapist), the coach must receive communication from the athlete's parent/guardian, giving him/her permission to return to practice and competition. For a sample form, refer to Appendix B.

Parents/guardians must provide a return to physical activity plan for athletes returning to activities with injuries/illnesses such as spinal injuries, fractures, torn ligaments or mononucleosis etc. The best plans will involve a medical professional who is involved in the athlete's treatment/recovery and who will communicate to the parents/guardians that their child is ready to move to the next level, and ultimately return to activity.

11. Coaches must ensure parents/guardians are aware of safety precautions related to environmental factors (e.g., temperature, weather, air quality, humidity, UV rays, insects, frostbite, dehydration).
12. Before involving athletes in outdoor athletics, coaches must take into consideration the temperature of the day, previous training and the length of time the athletes will be vigorously active.
13. Lightning is a significant weather hazard that may affect outdoor activities. Safety precautions and protocols must be developed and communicated to participants and spectators in response to potential lightning risk factors. At all times, the Board's lightning procedures are the mandatory minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (e.g., interschool game officials, convenors) the higher standard of care is to be followed. For lightning procedures refer to Appendix F.
14. Coaches must be aware of and adhere to the school board's transportation policy regarding interschool team travel (e.g., board sponsored and private vehicles). Parents/guardians must be informed of the mode of transportation and the athlete expectations required.
15. A working communication device (e.g., cell phone) must be accessible.
16. When travelling out-of-board (e.g., to a tournament in another city), share appropriate safety guidelines with host convenor prior to arrival.
17. Prior to teaching the skills of the sport/activity, the coach must:
 - outline the possible risks of the activity;
 - demonstrate how to minimize the risks;
 - set procedures and rules for safe play; and
 - provide instruction on concussion prevention and awareness, e.g.:
 - the definition and the seriousness of a concussion
 - the signs and symptoms
 - the importance of reporting the suspicious of a concussion to coach/parents
 - prevention techniques for the activity (refer to Appendix C-5).
- **Documentation:** Attendance must be taken and recorded. Athletes are not to be permitted to practice or compete until the above has occurred.
18. The coach must keep a record of the following (e.g. via Coach's binder):
 - documentation of athlete attendance (refer to Appendix R)
 - all practice plans, with reference to progressive development of skills, attention paid to identifying inherent risks of the sport and safety techniques (refer to Appendix R);
 - medical and emergency contact information forms (refer to Appendix A); and
 - a concussion recognition tool (refer to Appendix C-2).

19. During the season of play appropriate skills must be taught. Coaches must teach proper techniques/strategies related to offensive and defensive skills.
20. Encourage athletes to have an Athlete Accident Insurance Policy.
21. Athletes must be made aware of the locations of fire alarms/exits and alternative exit routes.
22. If athletes are involved in an interschool sport which is not described in this document, refer to the curricular module or sport governing body guidelines. Determine whether the sport is higher or lower risk (refer to Table 1) and establish procedures accordingly. Apply for approval from an appropriate school board official.
23. Where an incident occurs that increases or could increase the risk of injury, corrective actions must take place to help prevent its reoccurrence.
24. At the beginning of the sport season, coaches must instruct athletes in expected conduct (e.g., in change rooms, when visiting schools).
25. The presence and location of spectators must not present a safety concern.
26. Any modifications teachers/coaches make to guideline statements must RAISE the level of safety, NOT lower it.
27. Game officials must be knowledgeable about the rules of sport.
28. Interschool athletics have been categorized into two areas: higher risk sports and lower risk sports (refer to Table 1). Higher risk sports are those sports which are characterized by:
 - a greater potential for injuries with severe consequences;
 - contact: person-to-person and person-to-equipment;
 - uniqueness of equipment used;
 - speed of action;
 - protective equipment used;
 - type of supervision required;
 - type of training required.
29. For higher risk sports, these additional requirements must be met:

At least one coach must possess one of the following coaching qualifications:

- A sport specific course(s)/certification(s) as stated on the specific activity page.
- Completion of sport-specific NCCP level 1 and/or 2 certification in the past.
- Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the specific activity (e.g., appropriate skills and progressions), and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines.
- Past experience within the last 3 years as a coach in the activity/sport, having knowledge of the activity (e.g., appropriate skills and progressions) and current safety practices as outlined in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines.

30. First Aid Coverage for Lower and Higher Risk Activities:

Follow the school's emergency action plan including accessibility to a vehicle for transportation of a student to hospital (refer to Appendix E)

The minimum requirement for first aid coverage of **lower risk activities** (refer to Table 1) is the presence of an individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured participants throughout the entirety of a practice and competition.

The minimum requirement for first aid coverage of **higher risk activities** (refer to Table 1) is an individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured athletes and:

- as a minimum, has current first aid certification, from a recognized first aid provider (e.g., St. John Ambulance, Red Cross) that includes CPR B or C and introduction to spinal injury;
 - is in the area and readily accessible during the entire practice/competition;
 - is knowledgeable of school board's concussion protocol for a suspected concussion;
 - is **not** a participant in the activity.
- a) For the purposes of providing first aid at practices the team coach or designate is responsible for:
- identifying athletes with medical condition(s) (e.g. asthma, type one diabetes), managing those medical conditions and providing for emergency first aid as needed;
 - having access to a copy of the student's interschool athletic participation form - medical information section (refer to Part B of Appendix A);
 - being knowledgeable of the practice site's emergency response;
 - identifying and managing a suspected concussion and following up with parents/EMS;
 - checking that first aid kits are available and accessible;
 - checking there is a suitable means of communication on site (e.g. phone);
 - checking there are procedures in place for calling 911;
 - implementing Universal precautions when dealing with blood or bodily fluids (e.g. first aid gloves);
 - completing Board/school required student injury/accident reports.
- b) For the purposes of providing first aid at competitions, on or off school site, the team coach or designate is responsible for their own students:
- Identifying medical condition(s), managing those medical conditions and providing for emergency first aid as needed.
 - Identifying and managing a suspected concussion and follow up with parents/emergency medical services.
 - Having access to the medical information section of the interschool athletic participation form (refer to Part B of Appendix A).
 - Completing school board/school required student injury/accident reports.
- c) For the purposes of providing first aid when hosting a competition the coach or designate/convenor of a tournament must:
- have knowledge of the site's emergency response;
 - check that first aid kits are available and accessible;
 - check there is a suitable means of communication on site (e.g. phone);
 - check there are procedures in place for calling 911;
 - implement universal precautions when dealing with blood or bodily fluids;
 - provide for first aid coverage.

Table 1: Higher and Lower Risk Activities/Sports

Higher Risk	Lower Risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alpine Skiing/Snowboarding ● Broomball - Ice ● Cheerleading - Acrobatic ● Field Hockey ● Gymnastics ● Hockey - Ice ● Lacrosse - Field ● Ringette - Ice ● Swimming and Synchronized Swimming ● Track and Field - High Jump ● Track and Field - Shot Put ● Water Polo ● Wrestling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Badminton ● Ball Hockey/Cosom Hockey ● Baseball - Fastball ● Basketball ● Bowling/Lawn Bowling ● Cricket ● Cross-Country Running/Orienteering ● Cross-Country Skiing ● Curling ● Floorball ● Football - Flag/Touch ● Golf ● Handball - Wall ● Lacrosse - Inter (Soft) ● Rugby - Flag/Touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skipping ● Soccer- Indoor/Outdoor ● Softball - Fast Pitch ● Softball - Lob-ball/Slo-Pitch/Three-Pitch ● Team Handball ● Tennis ● Track and Field - Hurdles ● Track and Field - Track Events ● Track and Field - Triple Jump/Long Jump ● Tug of War ● Ultimate Disc ● Volleyball ● Volleyball - Beach

B. Introduction to Sport - Activity Page Components

Please note:

- All statements found on the sport/activity pages and supporting Appendices A-R are the minimum standards. An activity must not occur unless these guidelines have been addressed.
- The statements in the sport/activity pages of the Safety Guidelines are not listed in any order of priority.
- Lists of examples in the Safety Guidelines are not exclusive.

1. Sport/Activity Pages

- Guidelines for each activity are outlined according to the following critical components:

Equipment Clothing, Footwear and Jewellery Facilities	Special Rules/Instructions Supervision
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- With some exceptions, appropriate age divisions are not described on activity pages. It is the responsibility of each school board to determine the age appropriateness of these activities. Where ages are determined in activity pages (e.g. Ice Hockey: grades 6, 7 and 8 only), the standard has been determined by experts in the field.

2. Equipment

- a) When using any equipment, care must be taken to determine that it is safe for use (e.g., no sharp edges, sharp corners, cracks, or splinters) and that its size, mass and strength are appropriate.
- b) All balls must be properly inflated.
- c) **Protective equipment.** Prior to participation teachers/coaches are to check that the protective equipment, described under the Equipment section on the activity page, is being properly worn by the students (e.g., properly fitted (as per manufacturer's guidelines) and properly worn cycling helmet with chin straps done up).

If purchasing protective eyewear, eyewear must meet the standard for that activity or must meet ASTM F803 standard or equivalent.

- d) Where appropriate, teachers and coaches, when participating in the activity with the students during practices are encouraged to wear the protective equipment not only for personal protection, but to act as a role model for students (e.g., CSA approved ice hockey helmets when ice skating).
- e) Personal Equipment:
 - Athletes and parents must be made aware that equipment brought from home for use in interschool sporting activities must be in safe playing condition (e.g., hockey helmets, racquets, golf clubs, and hockey sticks).
 - Parents and athletes must be made aware of safety precautions with mouth guards and eyeglasses, including the need for an eyeglass strap and shatterproof lenses for some activities (refer to Appendix A).
 - Where sport-governing bodies, and/or local/regional/provincial athletic associations require specific personal equipment (e.g., throat protector in hockey), parents/guardians and athletes must provide equipment that conforms to recognized standards.

- Where school boards, schools or parents/guardians provide protective equipment, all equipment must conform to recognized standards (e.g., CSA-approved hockey helmets) and must fit properly.
 - Personal equipment must not be altered beyond the adjustments provided for in the original equipment. Any alteration that compromises the protection that the equipment provides (e.g., cutting a portion off the back of mouth guards) destroys the safety certification.
 - Student athletes must be informed that they are not to share water bottles.
 - Athletes must be informed that they have a responsibility to report personal equipment problems and defects to the supervising coach.
- f) Non-Personal Equipment:
- All equipment must be checked regularly by the coach to determine that it is in good working order. Athletes also must be encouraged to report equipment problems to coaches. For more information, refer to Appendix I-2.
 - Equipment needs to be inspected and maintained on a regular basis by capable and knowledgeable personnel (e.g., inspection company, Board Health and Safety Committee) and documentation maintained.
 - Coaches must perform a visual check of equipment before each practice and competition and remove or have broken equipment repaired.
 - When borrowing, renting, or lending equipment for practice or competition (e.g., wrestling mats, lane ropes, gymnastic equipment), the coach must determine that equipment conforms to recognized safety standards and that it has been inspected for safety.
- g) Helmets

Helmet requirements, Safety Standards Associations and/or certification standards, can be found on the specific activity/sport pages under Equipment.

Recognized Safety Standard Associations for Helmets:

The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines recognizes the following safety standard associations in its guidelines:

- Canadian Standards Association - CSA
- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission - CPSC
- American Society of Testing and Materials - ASTM
- National Operating Committee on Standards in Athletic Equipment - NOCSAE
- Snell Memorial Foundation - Snell Standard
- British Standards Institute - BS
- Standards Association of Australia - AS
- Common European Norm - CEN
- Safety Equipment Institute - SEI

Selection of helmets for activities where specific helmets have been developed:

Helmets designed for the type of hazards encountered in the activity will provide the optimal required protection for the activity.

Select a helmet that meets the protection standards (certification) for the specific activity/sport as determined by a recognized safety standards association.

Selection of helmets for activities where specific helmets have not been developed (e.g. ice skating).

The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines lists on its activity pages the types of helmets that offer the best protection against ice skating injuries as recommended by the following safety organizations: Parachute, Canada Safety Council, and the Ontario School Board

Insurance Exchange

Selection of Multi Purpose Helmets:

Some helmets are marketed as 'multi sport' meaning they meet the safety standard for more than one activity (e.g. cycling).

For a multipurpose helmet to be used for an activity/sport, the helmet must have an identification of a safety standard certification (e.g. sticker/identification on the package or on the helmet) from a recognized safety standards association indicating that it meets the required safety standards for those activities the helmet will be used for.

Select a suitable helmet for the activity:

- Reference the specific activity page in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines
- Consult the sport governing body of the activity.
- Consult a reputable provider (retailer) of the equipment for information on the most suitable helmet.
- Consult Parachute at www.parachutecanada.org

Certification sticker's location: To be sure that the helmet meets the safety standard (certification) for your particular activity/sport:

- Most helmets that meet a particular standard will contain a special label that indicates compliance usually found on the liner inside of the helmet.

CSA Standards: Where a Canadian Standard Association standard becomes available for an activity helmet, the CSA approved helmet is to be the choice for use.

- h) When equipment (e.g. fitness equipment) is purchased second hand or donated to your school/school board, follow the guidelines for new/donated equipment in Appendix H.

3. Clothing, Footwear and Jewellery

- a) Athletic footwear, prescribed team uniforms and clothing for practice must be appropriate for the activity/sport and must not present a safety concern.
- b) Devices used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- c) Jewellery**

Exposed jewellery being worn during physical activity can pose a hazard to the wearer and/or other participants and be the cause of an injury. Jewellery can be caught up in equipment, on another person or their clothing, or be hit by a projectile.

Sample types of jewellery:

- Hanging jewellery on neck, wrists, ears, torso
- Studs on ears, face, tongue, torso
- Loops/hoops/bars on ears, face, torso
- Rings on fingers, toes
- Watches/bracelets (hard material) on wrist/ankles
- Spacers in ears
- Hair pins, clips, barrettes

Medic alert identification and religious articles of faith that cannot be removed must be taped or securely covered.

Finger rings are not permitted for any activity.

Criteria for the removal and wearing of jewellery during practices and competitions:

- The wearing of jewellery during practices and competitions must meet the rules of the governing body of the sport/activity and local athletic association.
- Where jewellery is not addressed by any of the above mentioned groups the following is a guideline that can be used by boards/schools:
 - During group/team activities where body contact is an integral part of the activity, no jewellery to be worn.
 - During individual/group/team activities where there is a possibility of (incidental) contact with other participants or equipment - no exposed jewellery to be worn.
 - During individual/group activities where there is little chance of (incidental) contact with other participants (e.g. track events, alpine skiing, curling) exposed jewellery does not have to be removed.
 - For those activities where there are safety concerns with wearing jewellery, statement can be found on individual pages (e.g. "No hanging jewellery").

For all activities the coach is to be vigilant and to have the student remove any piece of jewellery they feel may pose a safety hazard to the wearer or other participants.

4. Facilities

- a) To provide a safe environment for interschool athletics, the convenor/coach must make a pre-activity check of the facilities and equipment to be used. This could be done visually or recorded on a check list (refer to Appendices I-1 to I-3). Hazards must be identified and removed as a factor in the activity. Potentially dangerous and immovable objects (e.g., goalposts, protruding stage, bleachers, and benches) must be brought to the attention of athletes, coaches, officials, etc. Athletes also must be encouraged to report facility problems to the coach. For more information on the role of the athlete in safety, refer to Appendix J.
- b) In an emergency situation (e.g., lightning, severe weather, medical emergency) the supervisor in charge of the excursion must follow School Board protocol. If the excursion takes place at an outdoor education facility whose emergency protocol has a higher standard of care than the School Board protocol, then the outdoor education facility protocol must be followed.
- c) All interschool facilities and major equipment must be inspected and a written report completed by a reputable third party on a regular basis.
- d) **Moving portable goals**
 - Coach/staff member must supervise moving portable goals.
 - Coach/staff member must inform students of procedures for moving portable goals and review periodically
 - If assisting the coach/staff member in the moving of portable goals, only students who have been properly trained can be used. Constant visual supervision is required.
 - Coach/staff member is to designate an area a safe distance from the path of moving a portable goal in which other students are to stay. Check that the path is clear (no obstructions and/or students in the way)
- e) For all indoor activities, walls and stages must not be used as turning points or finish lines. A line or pylon could be designated in advance of the wall or stage.
- f) Floor sockets must have cover plates.

- g) Foreseeable risks must be identified and precautions taken to minimize risks. For safety precautions when using non-gymnasium areas, refer to Appendices G, I-3 and N.
- h) Equipment/furniture which presents a risk to the athlete must not be stored around the perimeter of the area in use for interschool athletics. A reasonable number of benches, as well as mats secured to the wall, are exceptions to this statement.
- i) The presence and location of spectators must not present a safety concern.
- j) A telephone or other suitable means of communication must be available for all activities/locations.
- k) Playing areas must be free from hazards (e.g. holes, glass and rocks). Severely uneven surfaces must be brought to the attention of the principal, coaches, convenor, athletes and municipal staff (where appropriate) and modifications made, if necessary. Playing areas must allow for safe footing and traction. Other facilities that are used (e.g., pools, arenas) must conform to local safety standards and be free from hazards. Concerns about potentially dangerous situations must be reported to appropriate authorities.
- l) Any use of a facility must be supervised.
- m) Regarding the opening or closing of gym divider door/curtains:
 - Coaches must inform students of procedures for opening and closing doors/curtains and review periodically (e.g. posted signage if applicable).
 - Constant visual supervision is required,
 - Coach/coach liaison **only** in charge of opening/closing. If assisting the coach in the opening/closing of the door/curtain, athletes must be properly trained.
 - Designate an area a safe distance from the path of the door/curtain in which athletes must remain during the opening/closing of the door/curtain. Check that path is clear (no obstructions and /or students in the way).
 - Remove key after door/curtain closes.
 - Inspect door/curtain on a regular basis for anything that would hinder effective operation.
 - Should the door/curtain manufacturer require a higher standard of care/supervision than the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines for the opening/closing of gym dividers and doors, the manufacturer's standard must be followed (e.g., only adults (including trained students 18 and over) can operate doors/curtains).

Noise can be a problem in gymnasiums where curtains divide teaching areas. Determine that students are able to hear and follow instructions/signals. Use strategies to address communication to students.

A teacher/supervisor who is not familiar with the operations related to divider doors/curtains must seek assistance from appropriate support staff and/or refrain from opening/closing divider doors/curtains until instructional support is received.

- n) Where running takes place off school site for a warm up or conditioning run and/or is an integral part of the activity:
 - Prior to initial use of route or course, coaches must do a safety check 'walk through' in order to identify potential problems.
 - Before initial attempt, coaches must outline to athletes the route or course (e.g., notice of areas to approach with caution).
 - If route is off school property, determine that athletes are not crossing busy intersections unless directly supervised.

o) Natural Ice Locations (Lakes, Ponds, Rivers):

Only Board/school approved natural ice locations are to be used.

An approved natural ice location is one that is:

- Monitored and tested by a recognized organization (e.g., local municipality, police, and snowmobile clubs) and/or a recognized knowledgeable individual (e.g., winter camp supervisor) that measures ice thickness for activity safety.

Prior to activity on natural ice surface teacher/supervisor must check with recognized/knowledgeable source for thickness of ice for specific activity. Ice surface is to be measured in several places.

For the following activities ice thickness must be a minimum of:

- Cross Country Skiing = 15 cm (6")
- Walking = 15 cm (6")
- Skating (group) games = 15 cm (6")

The use of natural ice involves some risk. Safety criteria to follow:

- For natural ice surfaces where conditions cannot be measured - stay off the ice.
- Stay away from unfamiliar paths or unknown ice, avoid traveling on ice at night unless necessary
- Obey all ice warning signs.
- Teacher/supervisor must be in close proximity to students on the ice surface.
- Teachers/supervisors are to be knowledgeable of procedures to follow for rescuing an individual who has fallen through the ice.
- Students are to be informed of ice safety and ice rescue procedures prior to activity e.g. not to go on the ice surface alone.

5. Special Rules/Instructions

- a) The skills of an interschool sport must be taught in proper progression prior to participation.
- b) Coaches must be encouraged to stay current with respect to safe exercise techniques.
- c) Prior to teaching skills of the sport the coach has a duty to:
 - outline the inherent risks involved in the activity;
 - demonstrate how to minimize the risks;
 - set procedures and rules for safe participation.
- d) Fitness development appropriate to the level of competition must be addressed.
- e) When involved in practice drills, athletes must not be required to close their eyes or be blindfolded.
- f) Before involving athletes in outdoor activity, the coaches must take into consideration:
 - environmental conditions (temperature, weather, air quality, humidity, UV index, insects, frost bite)
 - accessibility to adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) and student hydration before, during and after physical activity
 - previous training and fitness level
 - length of time and intensity of physical activity.

- g) Athletes must be made aware of ways to protect themselves from environmental conditions (e.g., use of hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, personal water bottles, insect repellent, appropriate clothing).
- h) Athletes must receive instruction on safety procedures related to severe weather conditions (e.g., lightning, funnel clouds, severe winds, tornadoes). Refer to Appendix F.
- i) Athletes must receive instructions on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- j) Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during and after physical activity at all indoor and outdoor sites to prevent dehydration.
- k) Interschool sports must be modified to the age and ability levels of the athletes.
- l) Some activities refer to an "In-Charge Person". While the coach/coach liaison is "In Charge" and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of persons under his/her care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as "In Charge" related to specific situations (e.g., a pool lifeguard). In activities where an "In Charge" person is designated, that person must make final decisions regarding the safety of the participants.
- m) Any student with a playing cast must provide a doctor's note or parent/guardian signed permission indicating it is safe for him/her to participate.
- n) An exposed orthopaedic apparatus must be soft or padded and must be approved by the person in charge prior to the commencement of the activity.
- o) Casts/orthopaedic devices must not present a safety concern to student athletes or other participants. To determine whether an athlete can compete, contact:
 - the sport governing body
 - relevant referees association
 - refer to the activity page

6. Supervision

Supervision is the vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation or direction. All facilities, equipment and activities have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.

- a) Definition of a coach: a coach can be any individual approved by the principal or designate (refer to Appendix O). Any coach who is not a teacher or administrator employed by the board or an individual with teaching certification approved by the principal (e.g., retired teacher, teacher not under contract) must:
 - complete the application form for outside coaches (refer to Appendix Q);
 - be interviewed and approved by the principal or designate (refer to Appendix P);
 - become familiar with relevant school and board policies and procedures provided by the principal or designate;
 - be assigned a coach liaison;
 - have a current police check.
- b) Role of Coach Liaison within a School District: the principal or designate is to appoint a coach liaison who is a teacher or administrator employed by the Board for every coach who is not a teacher or administrator employed by the board and not an individual with teaching certification approved by the principal (e.g., retired teacher, teacher not under contract).

The coach liaison will be responsible for carrying out all the duties required of a teacher pursuant to the Education Act and these Safety Guidelines (refer to Appendix O). The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the coach and will be determined by the principal or designate. As a minimum the designated coach liaison will provide “in-the-area” supervision for all practices, games, and competitions.

“In-the-area” supervision of a non-teacher coach means that the coach liaison **must be accessible** and at least one of the following criteria must be in place:

- coach liaison is visible;
 - coach liaison circulating on the same site;
 - coach liaison is at the same location and whereabouts is known;
 - if the coach is a high school athlete and under the age of 18, the coach liaison must be visible at all times.
- c) The Role of Coach Liaison Outside of the School District: When a school team is travelling outside of their school district, a coach liaison from the same school must accompany the team, must be accessible and at least one of the following criteria must be in place:
- coach liaison is visible;
 - coach liaison is circulating on the same site;
 - location of coach liaison is at the same location and whereabouts is known;
 - if a coach is a high school athlete and under the age of 18, the coach liaison must be visible at all times.
- d) Supervision by the Coach: All activities must be supervised. Three categories of supervision are designated in the document: “Constant visual”, “On-site”, and “In-the-area”. The categories are based on the principles of general and specific supervision which take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants’ skill level and the participants’ maturity. The three levels of supervision described below are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- “Constant visual” supervision means that the coach is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring “Constant visual” supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
 - “On-site” supervision entails coach presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms to the gym is considered part of on-site supervision.
 - “In-the-area” supervision occurs:
 - a) in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the coach is not nearby (e.g., alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
 - A coach is circulating.
 - The location of the coach has been communicated to the students and supervisors.
 - b) in single activities and those that may be combined (e.g. other in the area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball - wall). The following criteria must be in place:
 - The coach informs the students of the location of the activities.
 - The coach must be circulating between the activities and be readily accessible.

Example: During a track and field practice, some athletes are involved in high jump, some in relay, and others in distance running.

- “Constant visual” supervision - High Jump - Coach is at the event and is observing activity.

- "On-site" supervision - Relay - athletes are participating on the track/field and can be seen by the coach.
 - "In-the-area" supervision - Distance Running - athletes are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.
- e) Athletes must be aware that the use of equipment and the gymnasium are prohibited without the appropriate type of supervision. In addition to written or verbal communication, at least one of the following deterrents must be in place:
- locked doors;
 - signs on doors indicating that athletes are not to use the gym unless supervised;
 - staff scheduled and present in the area of the gym (e.g., an adjoining physical education office) in order to see athletes who might enter the gym unauthorized
 - the level of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the sport and the maturity of the athletes.
- f) Establish routines, rules of acceptable behaviour and appropriate duties of athletes at the beginning of the sport season and reinforce throughout the season. Coaches must sanction athletes for unsafe play or unacceptable behaviour, and must exercise that responsibility at all times. Refer to Appendix J for more information on athlete behaviour.
- g) Rules of the sport must be taught and strictly enforced.
- h) In situations where an occasional teacher or other teacher is asked to coach a practice or game, the following must occur: (co-op athletes, other secondary athletes or teacher candidates must not be the sole supervisor of a school team):
- the school administrator/designate must address the occasional teacher's knowledge and, where applicable, the qualifications/certifications for the activity as well as their ability to safely supervise/coach that activity/sport by following the safety criteria as outlined on the activity/sport page for the activity;
 - absent coach or administrator or designate must provide the Safety Guidelines page(s) for interschool sport/activity;
 - absent coach must specify restrictions/modifications for athletes with health or behavioural problems.
- i) When an interschool sport includes a large number of participants (e.g., a school cross-country team) the ratio of coaches to participants must satisfy safety concerns.
- j) A school is responsible for supervising its own spectators. The ratio of supervisor to spectators must address safety concerns.
- k) Sport convenor (event organizer) must address the issue of event security.
- l) When an interschool sport includes several higher-risk activities (e.g., track and field) the ratio of coaches to participants must satisfy safety concerns.

7. Coaching Qualifications

Coach in charge must:

- Review local guidelines for the sport and attend appropriate clinics and coaches' meetings.
- Adhere to coaching qualifications for higher-risk sports (refer to the individual sport pages).

Coaches must be encouraged to:

- Complete NCCP certification in the specific sport or equivalent in the sport which

- he/she is coaching.
- Attend a basic first aid course.

8. Coach's Role and Responsibilities

- a) The coach must work with student athletes in a professional manner that emphasizes respect, fair play and skill improvement.
- b) It is the coach's responsibility to be knowledgeable of the rules and the skills necessary for the athletes to play the game safely.
- c) The coach is to be familiar with the contents of:
 - the Board's Risk Management Policy and Administrative Procedures for Interschool Sports;
 - the Board's Transportation Policy;
 - Athletic Association By-Laws, if available.
- d) The interschool athletic participation form (refer to Part B of Appendix A) must be completed by the parent/guardian and returned prior to the athlete's participation in the first practice. Coaches must have access to the forms at ALL practices, games and competitions.
- e) Coaches must provide a suitable level of competition according to skill, size, age and conditioning of the athlete. Coaches must examine the intensity and frequency of drills, practices, and games in order not to put the athlete at risk (e.g., excessive repetition of heading or hitting skills).
- f) Inform parents, through written and /or verbal communication, of the times and locations of practices and games.
- g) When there has been an interruption to a competitive season of more than two weeks, coaches must provide appropriate practice time before competition may resume.
- h) Early in the season, clearly establish expectations and general conduct for practices and games. Involve players in formulating behavioural guidelines; fostering player discipline and self-control to minimize risks and promote fair and safe play (refer to Appendix J).
- i) The coach must communicate to players that there is zero tolerance towards initiation/hazing activities.
- j) Game Protocol:
 - Officials must be treated with respect. Officials' decisions are final. (e.g., officials' decisions can **only be questioned** through proper procedures).
 - It is the responsibility of the coaches to control their teams and instruct their players to participate in a safe and fair manner according to the rules of the game.
 - Visiting coaches are responsible for their teams' behaviour and the behaviour of volunteer drivers who represent their school.
 - Coaches must be aware of the school's coaching handbook (if available) and coaching code of behaviour where applicable.
- k) Participants must be appropriately supervised during all phases of the activity: practices, warm-up, competition and breaks. If a coach cannot fulfill the specified level of supervision, the activity must be stopped.

At the end of the practice/competition, the coach must determine that ALL team members have left the facility before leaving himself/herself.

- l) For all sports, where the coach is not of the same sex as the athlete(s) and where the athlete(s) is required or might be required to stay overnight, a supervisory adult, as approved by the principal of the school, of the same sex as the athlete(s), must be present and available at the accommodation site for the duration of their stay.
- m) For higher-risk sports, the coach must document athlete attendance and all practice plans, with reference to progressive development of skills, with attention paid to identify inherent risks of the sport (refer to Appendix R).
- n) Before each practice or game, the coach must visually inspect facilities and playing surfaces to determine that they meet safety guidelines. The coach must not allow participation if he/she is not satisfied that the facilities, including the playing surface, are safe.

9. Player's Role and Responsibilities

- a) All participants are expected to abide by the established behavioural guidelines.
- b) All participants are expected to report all injuries to the coach.
- c) All participants are expected to report any unsafe equipment/facilities to the coach.
- d) All participants are expected to report any behaviour that contravenes the established behavioural guidelines.

Introduction to the Appendices

Information in the Appendices addresses the required elements previously described in the Generic Section.

School Boards are to address all of the safety elements in the Appendices (e.g., parental permission, medical information).

Each appendix was developed as a sample for School Boards to localize as needed.