



## Hockey Canada Concussion Policy

### Purpose

Hockey Canada is committed to maintaining the health, well being and safety of all its participants. Safety is a top priority for those participating in the sport of hockey.

Hockey Canada recognizes the increased awareness of concussions and their potential long-term effects. This policy is intended to be a tool to assist in proper management of those who have a concussion or are suspected of having a concussion.

Hockey Canada encourages the prevention of concussions using sound education programs and enforcement of the rules of the game.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- The reduction of violence in the game.
- The reduction of head contact.
- The reduction of hitting from behind.
- Education of all participants on prevention and recognition of head injuries and responsible return to play.
- Encouraging respect and fair play.

### Scope

This policy applies to all players, coaches, officials, trainers, safety personnel, registered participants, parents/guardians, administrators, and decision makers of Hockey Canada.

### Adherence

Hockey Canada expects all governing bodies to be dedicated to reducing concussions and their impact through commitment to education and enforcement of the rules.

Hockey Canada expects all governing bodies to direct to all team coaches, trainers, safety personnel, and staff to adhere to Hockey Canada's Return to Play strategy as a minimum standard in addressing concussion injuries. (Appendix 1)

Each governing body determines an appropriate discipline for any club, team or individual who knowingly disregards their responsibility of requiring a physician's written permission permitting a player to return to play following a concussion.

### Process

- If a player is suspected of having a concussion,
  - They are immediately removed from play, regardless if the concussion occurs on or off the ice and they are not permitted to return to play that day.
  - If there are doubts, assume that a concussion has occurred.

- The player is referred to a physician for diagnosis as soon as possible.
- Once a player, who is experiencing “concussion like symptoms” is diagnosed, they are not permitted to return to play or practice/training until all of the return to play requirements are met. (Appendix 1).
- Written clearance from a physician is required as outlined in the return to play strategy prior to returning to activity. Copy of this documentation is maintained as per Member/Minor Hockey Association policy and procedures. (Attachment – template – Appendix 2)
- NOTE: Second impact syndrome, although rare, can occur in players who return to activity with ongoing symptoms. Monitoring of return to play is essential. Always err on the side of caution.

The player is observed for symptoms and signs of a concussion using the Hockey Canada Concussion Card or the current SCAT 5 Pocket Recognition Tool (Appendix 3).

Remember, even though symptoms may not be present or they come and go, the player is removed from play the day of the injury, does not return that day and sees a physician as soon as possible.

If a concussion is suspected, players are observed on site. If a licensed healthcare professional is available they can assist with this observation and evaluation. If the person on site is not a physician, the player is directed to a physician for diagnosis and follow up as soon as possible.

If the player experiences loss of consciousness assume a neck injury – call Emergency Services. If there is a significant loss of awareness and/or orientation, direct the player to an emergency room at the nearest hospital. If unsure err on the side of caution and call Emergency Services. It is important to become familiar with the red flags section of appendix 3 attached.

All injuries, including concussions are documented and reported as per member/association reporting policies. If the player is a child or adolescent, also report to the parents/guardians.

**All concussions and suspected concussions must be referred to a physician as soon as possible. Coaches, Safety Personnel, and parents/guardians are not to pressure the player to return to play until the player has completed the six-step return to play strategy and is medically cleared by a physician.**

**Important:**

A second sustained concussion on top of the first sustained concussion can lead to substantially more damage than one concussion alone. The effect of concussions are cumulative and the end result of several concussions could be ongoing symptoms. If not properly managed the result could be the end of a players’ participation in sport and affect other aspects of their life. Sufficient time between the concussion and return to play is critical. If there are previous concussions, it is important to report this to the physician.

**Children are more sensitive to the effects of a concussion and will need to have a longer period before returning to sport. Use symptoms rather than a set time frame when assessing return to play. Always follow the advice of a physician.**

***The Standards Committee and Risk Management Committee will review the Hockey Canada Concussion Policy annually.***