

TOWN OF THESSALON CONCUSSION POLICY

Thessalon Recreational Facilities

Effective date: February 21, 2017

Policy

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

Objective

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

The Town of Thessalon concussion policy is to provide concussion awareness to all individuals in the Town of Thessalon recreation programming, in addition to those participating in an activity being hosted by another group/organization in a Town of Thessalon facility. The Town of Thessalon will post the concussion policy at each of its recreational facilities.

The Town of Thessalon, all participants, coaches, community services and recreation and leisure staff, trainers and safety personnel, fitness trainers, parents, etc. have a role to play to ensure the safety of those participating in physical activity. This includes encouraging and motivating participants to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. Concussion resource information is available at www.ThinkFirst.ca.

Scope

This policy applies to participants at municipal recreation facilities and sport venues. Sports organizations who utilize municipal facilities will be made aware of/have access to the following information in this policy.

Concussion facts in Sport and Recreation Programming

All participants who experience symptoms and signs of a concussion must be seen by a physician as soon as possible. Concussion is a brain injury and without proper management, a concussion can result in permanent or severe brain damage.

A concussion most often occurs without a loss of consciousness but can include a loss of consciousness.

How a concussion can happen: blow to the head, face or jaw, or even elsewhere on the body; may also result from a whiplash effect to the head and neck that causes the brain to move rapidly back and forth within the skull.

Common Symptoms and Signs of a Concussion

Symptoms and signs may have a delayed onset (may be worse later that day or even the next morning), so participants should continue to be observed even after the initial symptoms and signs have returned to normal.

* A participant may show any one or more of these symptoms or signs:

Symptoms:

Headache
Dizziness
Feeling dazed
Seeing stars
Sensitivity to light
Ringing in ears
Tiredness
Nausea, vomiting
Irritability
Confusion, disorientation

Signs:

Poor balance or coordination
Slow or slurred speech
Poor concentration
Delayed responses to questions
Vacant stare
Decreased playing ability
Unusual emotions, personality change,
and inappropriate behavior

For a complete list of symptoms and signs, visit www.ThinkFirst.ca.

Caution: All participants should consult a physician when a concussion is suspected. Coaches, municipal staff, trainers and safety personnel, players or participants and parents should not attempt to treat a concussion without a physician's involvement.

Response to Loss of Consciousness:

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

Response to a Conscious Participant:

Remove the participant from the current game/practice/programming.

- Do not leave the participant alone; monitor symptoms and signs following Standard First Aid
- Do not administer medication.
- Inform the Coach/Recreation Staff, parent/guardian about the injury.
- The participant must not return to play in that game/practice/activity.
- The participant should be evaluated by a medical physician as soon as possible.
- Complete an incident report (available Town of Thessalon Municipal Office or Website) including all details of what, when, where, how, who. Include summary of actions taken in response to the incident.
- **Physician's approval is required for participant to return to physical activity.**

6 Step Return to Play

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

Step 1 No activity, only complete rest. Proceed to Step 2 only when all symptoms are gone. This includes avoiding both mental and physical stress.

Step 2 Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.

Step 3 Sport/activity specific activities and training (e.g. skating).

Step 4 Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with severity of the concussion and the participant. Go to Step 5 after medical clearance. (reassessment and note)

Step 5 Begin drills with body contact.

Step 6 Game play.

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

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

Never return to play if symptoms persist!

Prevention Tips

Participants

- Make sure your helmet fits snugly and that the strap is fastened.
- Wear protective equipment that is in good condition and properly fitted.
- Wear all protective equipment that is mandatory for the activity/sport and has the required certifications.
- Get a custom fitted mouth guard.
- Respect other participants.
- Respect the rules of the game.
- No hits to the head.
- No hits from behind.
- Do not return to play until fully recovered.

Coach/Trainer/Recreation Staff

- Eliminate all checks to the head.
- Eliminate all hits from behind.
- Recognize symptoms and signs of concussion.
- Inform and educate participants about the risks of concussion.
- When in doubt, sit them out.

Resources:

- Concussionsontario.org
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
- Ministry of Health
- Parachute Canada
- Hockey Canada