

CONCUSSION POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN CANADIAN SPORT

► A checklist for National Sport Organizations

When it comes to building a culture of concussion safety, a National Sport Organization (NSO)'s Policy and Protocol work in tandem.

To meet Sport Canada requirements, every NSO should have a:

1. Concussion Policy

Essentially the who, what, when, where, why and how the concussion protocol is used in your organization.

Includes:

- Prevention
- Surveillance
- References to the Awareness, Detection and Management aspects that become operational under the Concussion Protocol.

2. Harmonized Concussion Protocol

Addresses the implementation of Awareness, Detection and Management in day-to-day operations in accordance with the Concussion Policy.

Includes:

- Awareness (education)
- Detection (recognition)
- Management

While it is possible to combine both Policy and Protocol in one document, keeping them separate may allow for more flexibility. The Policy is more consistent over time while the specifics of the Protocol are likely to change as a result of emerging evidence and best practice.

► A harmonized concussion protocol aligns with the Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport.

[View the Guideline and harmonized protocol template](#) 

In order to create a comprehensive concussion Policy, be sure to include these components:

1

POLICY STATEMENT



Description - *The Policy statement addresses the NSO's position on head injuries and concussions. Additionally, it highlights the organization's commitment towards creating a safer experience for athletes and everyone involved in the sport.*

Sample Text - [NSO] recognizes that participation in any sport or physical activity bears some inherent risk of head injuries and concussions. NSO is fully committed to maintaining the health and safety of its members, and recognizes that short-and long-term consequences of concussions pose a significant public health issue.

2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE



Description - This section outlines the goals of the concussion Policy, who the Policy applies to, and what components are addressed in this document.

- ▶ **Sample Text** - The purpose of this Policy is to create a safe and positive sport environment through education and training. In addition, to make [NSO] members, registrants and participants aware of evidence-based resources to assist in recognizing and managing a concussion injury.

This Policy applies at all times wherever an [NSO] activity takes place. This includes workplaces and external locations in Canada and abroad, and includes all events and activities sanctioned by [NSO]. This Policy document focuses primarily on Prevention and Surveillance of concussions, and supplements the Concussion Protocol, which covers the areas of Awareness, Detection, and Management.

3 CONCUSSION PREVENTION



Description - This section describes why Prevention strategies are important in creating a safe sport environment, and details the steps the organization will implement to address this important area.

- ▶ **Sample Text** - The incidence of concussions can be mitigated by the proper implementation of prevention strategies.

Prevention strategies include:

- Limiting contact during practice and games, particularly for younger participants.
- Modifying rules to limit the use of certain drills or techniques to reduce the risk of head injury.
- Ensuring that equipment fits well, is in good condition, is stored properly, and is replaced according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Ensuring fair play and respect for opponents are ethical values that are instilled in all sport, recreation and physical activities carried out by the organization.

4 CONCUSSION AWARENESS



Description – Although this is typically included in the Concussion Protocol (education), the NSO's commitment to awareness should be referenced in the Policy.

- ▶ **Sample Text** - [NSO] will make concussion resources available to all members, including this Policy and the Concussion Protocol.

5 CONCUSSION DETECTION AND MANAGEMENT



Description - Although the elements of Detection and Management are typically included in the Concussion Protocol, these should be referenced in the Policy in order to provide a holistic picture of the organization's approach towards concussions.

- ▶ **Sample Text** - The Concussion Protocol will be implemented at all sanctioned activities and events in case of a suspected or diagnosed concussion. Please refer to the organization's Protocol document for more details.

6 CONCUSSION SURVEILLANCE



Description - *This section outlines the steps to be taken in regards to the collection, management and use of data pertaining to concussions by the organization.*

- ▶ **Sample Text** - [NSO] will determine appropriate methods to collect and maintain data regarding suspected concussions, concussion diagnoses, and return to play. Data will be reported in an aggregated format without personal identification of any individuals.

Data collected will be used to monitor changes in injuries over time, inform prevention strategies and assess the impact of [NSO] concussion policy and protocol.

7 POLICY REVIEW



Description – This section specifies how often the policy will be reviewed and updated.

- ▶ **Sample Text** – [NSO] will review this Policy on an annual basis.

For more information, contact:

Sport Information Resource Centre

✉ info@sirc.ca

📞 1-613 231-7472