



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Policy on Concussion Protocol and Procedure

Whereas Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer serves as the governing body for the sport in this region for non-scholastic soccer, our Board of Directors approved the policy which will align and support the procedures within Pennsylvania Act 101 to ensure the safety of the children playing soccer within our boundaries.

Act 101, known as the “Safety in Youth Sports Act,” was signed into law in 2011, and establishes standards for managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries to student athletes. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer adopts Act 101 and amends it to protect its young athletes. The following “FAQ” was developed as a corollary to the PA Department of Health’s FAQ on Act 101.

For the purposes of this document- “organization” or “organizational member” will be used to refer to a member or affiliate of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer. Members or affiliates that register players and coaches in our association are responsible for compliance and enforcement. The organizational member may be a direct member of the state association (travel league or recreation/intramural league), or an affiliate (travel club or recreational club).

In common parlance- your local, grassroots level, i.e. the club. The club is responsible for this policy. Intramural leagues are often part of a club who also sponsors travel teams or rec league teams. Travel or Rec leagues, due to their nature, are less likely to have a need to employ the policy. However, they must be aware of it and we seek their assistance in enforcement to ensure no player returns prematurely from a brain injury

What is the minimal standard for compliance?

Annually- each organization must do the following:

- Abide by the state association policy and PA Act 101
- Provide educational materials to its parents and players.
- Ensure that each coach take one of the on-line training courses approved by the PA Department of Health.
- Submit the Annual Concussion Education and Training Certification form which verifies your compliance with in your organization.

Where can I find on-line courses or other educational materials?

The information is located on our website, EPYSA.org, under “resources.” You can also find it on the PA Department of Health’s website or the Center for Disease Control (CDC) *Heads Up* program site.

As with Act 101, are member organizations required to have parent/guardians sign and return to the organization, an acknowledgement of “receipt and review of a concussion and traumatic brain injury information sheet”?

It is a best practice and recommended to follow that guideline. It is possible that you could use available technology to do so rather than an ink signature. As per our association guidelines, information may be provided by hard copy or electronically. Regardless, it is your local responsibility to educate and then certify your compliance.

How often do parents and players need to be educated? Which players- travel or rec/intramural?

All parents, regardless of their child’s competition level, must annually be provided with the latest educational materials. The policy does not address specific ages or competitive levels, Act 101 addresses “interscholastic athletics.” In the absence of such language we feel all travel players, and recreational /intramural players of “interscholastic” age (generally, 6th grade and above) should be educated annually with the latest materials. Recreational and Intramural players under the ages of middle school may be subject to the requirements this law. Certain younger aged players may not comprehend the information, making all the more important to educate the parents and legal guardians.

How long are the on-line training courses? What is the cost?

Approximately 20-30 minutes. A certificate of completion is provided at the end. The courses currently approved by the PA Department of Health are all free as is the information for distribution.

Do all coaches need to take the annual training courses, or just the head coach?

ALL coaches, head or assistant, must take the course.

Who is responsible for keep track of the records that coaches have completed their annual training course certification?

The member organization is required to maintain the records and annually certify themselves with the state association. The state association reserves the right to inspect and audit a member’s records to ensure compliance. Penalties for failure to comply would be enforced.

Who is responsible for policing and enforcing coaching violations?

The organizational member is responsible.

Is concussion baseline testing required of players?

Concussion baseline testing is not required under the Act, or the association policy. That may be an organizational decision, or a family decision. Resources are available at EPYSA.org

Who approves a player's return to play?

An "appropriate medical professional," who is defined as a licensed physician who is trained in concussion evaluation and management or a certified health care professional who is trained in concussion evaluation and management and designated by such licensed physician.

It is common to find a licensed physician who has no training in concussions. A physician without current training would not know the protocol for dealing with a concussion. The state association will provide resources to locate specialists who may have more than the minimum required training under Act 101

Are athletic trainers considered appropriate medical professionals?

According to Act 101, yes. Trainers, as licensed health care professionals, may be considered appropriate as long as they are designated by a licensed physician who is trained in the management of concussions.

Who should determine if a concussion has occurred?

An appropriate medical professional.

If an appropriate medical professional is on-site, only they may examine and determine if a concussion has occurred. If no appropriate medical professional is available to determine if a concussion has or has not been sustained, the player should not return to play.

Can a coach with concussion training make the decision for return to play?

NO. Coaches or game officials may remove a player from a game who is suspected of concussion. The player must be evaluated by and receive permission in writing to return to play from an appropriate medical professional. We recommend the coach and a designated organization officer receive a copy for record keeping.

Is an organization required to adopt its own policy?

It is not required; however, it is best practice to do so. A sample policy can be found www.biapa.org. As we learn of other quality examples, we will share best practices on EPYSA.org.