



## TENNESSEE STATE SOCCER ASSOCIATION (TSSA) CARDIAC ARREST POLICY 32

(The following information and forms comply with the Tennessee Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act)

In compliance with *Tennessee Code Annotated Section 68-54-101*, TSSA has adopted policy, guidelines, and forms as developed by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) to inform and educate coaches, athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature, risk and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest.

Every individual involved in athletics must become more proactive in identifying and treating athletes who show signs of sudden cardiac arrest. In order to address this critical issue, TSSA has created the following policy for publication by all its member associations:

***Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with sudden cardiac arrest, shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.\****

Education is the key to identifying and treating athletes who show signs of sudden cardiac arrest during athletic participation. It is very important that every administrator, coach, parent, official, athlete, and health-care professional know the symptoms and steps to take when dealing with athletes that display signs of sudden cardiac arrest. Sudden Cardiac Arrest can be a serious health issue and should be treated as such.

TSSA is asking every member team and club/association to adopt and comply with the terms set forth below in compliance with Tennessee law (Public Chapter 325).

1. Member Clubs/Associations will adopt guidelines and other pertinent information and forms as approved by the TDH to inform and educate coaches, administrators, athletes, and their parents/legal guardians of the nature, risks, and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risk associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing any of the following symptoms:
  - a. Fainting or seizures during exercise;
  - b. Unexplained shortness of breath;
  - c. Chest pains;
  - d. Dizziness;
  - e. Racing heart rate;
  - f. Extreme Fatigue.
  
2. Member clubs/associations will **require annual completion** of a sudden cardiac arrest education program to be taken by all coaches, managers, and staff, whether they are employed or a volunteer. The program should be approved and overseen by the governing body of the club/association. In developing the program, the club/association may use, at no cost, materials and resources provided by Tennessee State and/or TSSA. The club/association shall make the sudden cardiac arrest education program available on its web site and members shall have access free of charge.

3. Member Clubs/Associations will **require, on a yearly basis**, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet to be signed and returned by each coach, manager, and board of director prior to participation in practice or competition for the year. (see attached, Cardiac Arrest Acknowledgement Form: Coach/Manager/Board Member)
4. Member Clubs/Associations will **require, on a yearly basis**, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet be reviewed by each athlete and the athlete's parent/legal guardian. The information sheet shall be signed and returned by the athlete, if the athlete is eighteen (18) years of age or older, otherwise by the athlete's parent/legal guardian, prior to the athlete participating in practice or competition, to confirm that both the parent/legal guardian and the athlete have reviewed the information and understand its contents. (see attached, Cardiac Arrest Acknowledgement Form: Athlete/Parent/Guardian)
5. Maintain all documentation of the completion of a sudden cardiac arrest education course program and signed sudden cardiac arrest information sheets for a period of **three (3) years**.
6. Establish as policy the immediate removal of any athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity or immediately following an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:
  - a. Fainting or seizures during exercise;
  - b. Unexplained shortness of breath;
  - c. Chest pains;
  - d. Dizziness;
  - e. Racing heart rate;
  - f. Extreme Fatigue.
7. Establish as policy that an athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest and not return to play or participate in any supervised team activities involving physical exertion, including games, tournaments, showcases, college combines, or practices until the athlete has been evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or gradual or full return to play. (see attached, TSSA Return to Play Form: Cardiac)
8. After an athlete who has experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest has been evaluated and received clearance for a gradual return to play from a health care provider, then a club/association may allow a gradual return to play based upon the recommendations provided by the health care provider. The club/association should make sure that regular updates to the health care provider are being made on a weekly basis until the athlete has been fully cleared by the health care provider.
9. No licensed health care professional or other person acting in good faith within the authority prescribed under this policy shall be liable on account of any act or omission in good faith. As used in this policy, "good faith," shall not include willful misconduct, gross negligence, or reckless disregard.

10. Any person found to be in violation of ignoring this policy, the signs and symptoms associated with sudden cardiac arrest, or allowing an athlete to return to practice or competition during which the athlete experienced the symptoms without written clearance from the health care provider for a full return to play shall be suspended in the following manner:
- a. For a first violation, suspension from coaching or administration for the remainder of the season;
  - b. For a second violation, suspension from coaching or administration for the remainder of the season and the next season;
  - c. For a third violation, permanent suspension from coaching or administration.

**Sudden Cardiac Arrest Forms and Checklists**

[Tennessee Law: Public Chapter 325](#)

[Cardiac Arrest Acknowledgement Form \(Athlete/Parent/Guardian\)](#)

[Spanish Version: Cardiac Arrest Acknowledgement Form \(Athlete/Parent Guardian\)](#)

[Cardiac Arrest Acknowledgement Form \(Coaches/Managers/Board of Directors\)](#)

[Spanish Version: Cardiac Arrest Acknowledgement Form \(Coaches/Manager/Board of Directors\)](#)

[TSSA Return to Play Form \(Cardiac\)](#)

Simon's Fund: <http://www.simonsfund.org/>