



AMERICAN
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HEALTH
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ACHA Guidelines: Best Practices for Collegiate
Intramural, Club and Recreational Sports
Health and Safety

Presentation and Publication

Presentation:

ACHA Guidelines: Best Practices for Collegiate Intramural, Club and Recreational Sports Health and Safety
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About ACHA

Our Vision

Health and well-being are foundational to college student success. ACHA's vision is to be the recognized voice of expertise in college health.

Our Mission

To serve as the principal leadership organization for advancing the health of college students and campus communities through advocacy, education, and research.

ACHA creates and supports an environment where students, faculty, and staff thrive by:

- Committing to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility and an evolving approach for continued support of DEIJA in college health and well-being.
- Building greater acceptance and recognition of the critical role of college health and well-being in building healthy campuses.
- Sharing knowledge between multiple disciplines with a unified focus of advancing the health and well-being of college students and their communities.
- Developing multi-faceted, data-driven, whole-person approaches to holistic campus health and well-being in collaboration with their communities.
- Focusing on inclusive and evolving research, education, networking, and advocacy to achieve these outcomes.

About USCAH

Who we are

The U.S. Council for Athletes' Health (USCAH) was founded upon the need within athletic institutions for trusted, independent partners with the experience and expertise to advise and consult with organizations regarding their healthcare delivery system. We are committed to providing independent and unbiased medical expertise to organizations and individuals dedicated to the optimal health and safety for the athletes they serve.

- USCAH provides independent, third-party athlete health and safety consultation, education, and compliance resources to colleges, universities, secondary schools, youth sport organizations, professional sport organizations, and national governing bodies.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be the leader in providing resources, programming, and solutions for athlete healthcare and safety.

Our Mission

Our mission is to collaborate with every athletic organization to inspire and ensure athlete health and safety is a priority.



Introduction

- Millions of students participate in club, intramural, and recreational sports in the collegiate setting compared to the NCAA's average rate of approximately 500,000 annually.
- Club sports provide many positive outcomes for students, but they do have inherent risks for the students and universities that sponsor them.
 - Injury rates in club sports are significantly higher compared to NCAA collegiate sports.
 - Catastrophic injuries have occurred resulting in death.
 - Colleges and universities have been held liable in court.
- Currently, athletic healthcare providers (i.e., sports medicine physicians and athletic trainers) may not be present during these activities.
- Almost half of campus recreation directors agreed that safety issues associated with campus recreation was a problem.
 - A survey of campus recreation programs found that 75% indicated they did not require any type of emergency management training for faculty.

Introduction

- With varying institutional and governing body rules and regulations or the lack thereof, consistency is needed regarding athlete health and safety guidelines in this space.
- Therefore, USCAH partnered with the ACHA to create best practices to aid institutions in reducing risk and protecting students.

Guidelines

Six Categories that Will Aid in Minimizing Risk and Maximizing the Health of Student Athletes

1. Education and documentation
2. Sport specific health and safety considerations for participation
3. Athletic healthcare provider availability
4. Designation of club sport safety officers and risk managers
5. Emergency preparedness
6. Policy and procedure development

Education and Documentation

Education and Documentation

All club sport safety officers, coaches, and staff should receive and complete annual health and safety education and training on the following topics at a minimum prior to participation:

- Basic first aid, injuries, and conditions in sport
- Bloodborne pathogens and universal precautions
- Cardiac issues and sudden cardiac arrest in sport
- Cervical spine injuries and management
- Collapse in athletes
- Concussions
- Environmental monitoring and safety
- Exertional heat illness and prevention
- Emergency action plans
- Mental health in sport
- Sport specific health and safety considerations
- In-person CPR and AED training

Education and Documentation

All club and intramural sport students, volunteers, and officials should receive and complete annual health and safety education and training on the following topics at a minimum prior to participation :

- Basic injuries and conditions in sport
- Bloodborne pathogens and universal precautions
- Collapse in athletes
- Concussions
- Exertional heat illness and prevention
- Mental health in sport
- Sport specific health and safety considerations

Education and Documentation

All club and intramural sport students (including safety officers), coaches, staff, volunteers, and officials should receive and complete the following waivers and forms associated with athlete health and safety annually at a minimum prior to participation :

- Participation agreement/ Assumption of Risk Waiver
- Safety Officer Agreement
 - For safety officers only
- Proof of clearance for physical activity by a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner
 - For club and intramural sport students only

Risk managers and the institution should be able to track completion and provide proof that education, training, waivers, and forms have been completed upon request for all club sport safety officers and risk managers as well as club and intramural sport students, coaches, staff, volunteers, and officials.

Sport Specific Health and Safety Considerations for Participation

Sport Specific Health and Safety Considerations for Participation

Institutions should consider using a waiver that includes the following sport/activity specific information:

- Risk factors for injury
- Common and severe injuries, conditions, and concerns
- Injury prevention strategies
- Personal protective equipment associated with the sport/activity
- Other sport specific considerations

Each sport/activity offered by the organization/institution should have their own education, training, and emergency action planning. This should be provided prior to participation.

Athletic Healthcare Provider Availability

Athletic Healthcare Provider Availability

Physicians with a sports medicine background and athletic trainers are the appropriate athletic healthcare providers for managing acute injuries and conditions in this setting. These providers can be:

- Full-time staff
- Part-time staff
- Hourly employees
- Independent contractors/ self-employed
- Intern, resident, fellow, or attending physicians
- Certified/Licensed professional students and/or interns

Athletic Healthcare Provider Availability

Athletic healthcare provider coverage for training sessions, games, competitions, and other activities/events can be classified as:

- Present- visual contact with sport and/or activity
- On-site- close proximity and/or during business hours
- On-call- able to report to sport and/or activity within 15 minutes of notification
- Not present

Designation of Club Sport Safety Officers and Risk Managers

Designation of Club Sport Safety Officers and Risk Managers

We recommend that each club sport should identify a minimum of 3 students to serve as safety officers. At least 2 safety officers should be present at every club sport activity/event.

It is recommended that their responsibilities as it pertains to athlete health and safety include:

- Complete in person first aid, CPR, and AED training
- Complete annual health and safety education
- Provide assistance and first aid if an injury occurs (within their scope of education and/or training)
- Activate the appropriate emergency action plan (EAP) during emergency situations
- Communicate all injuries and/or emergency situations to the designated risk manager(s) on staff in the organization/institution
- Have an adequately stocked first aid kit at all club sport activities/events
- Communicate all questions and concerns to the designated risk manager(s) in the organization/institution

Designation of Club Sport Safety Officers and Risk Managers

Each safety officer should be assigned to a risk manager on staff who is responsible for overseeing and making final decisions regarding the health and safety for all club, intramural, and recreational sport participants at the organization/institution.

It is recommended that the risk manager(s) on staff responsible for the health and safety of all club, intramural, and recreational sport participants:

- Complete in person first aid, CPR, and AED training
- Provide a resource for safety officers to complete in person first aid, CPR, and AED training
- Complete annual health and safety education
- Provide a resource for all students to complete annual health and safety education
- Track and document the completion of athlete health and safety education and training of all safety officers, students, coaches, staff, volunteers, and officials annually
- Provide assistance and first aid if an injury occurs (within their scope of education and/or training)

Designation of Club Sport Safety Officers and Risk Managers

It is recommended that the risk manager(s) on staff responsible for the health and safety of all club, intramural, and recreational sport participants (continued):

- Establish emergency action plans for all facilities, venues, and catastrophic injuries/conditions and review and rehearse them annually at a minimum with the appropriate individuals
- Activate the appropriate emergency action plan during emergency situations Track and document all injuries (if an athletic healthcare provider is not available) and emergency situations
- Aid all safety officers in properly stocking first aid kits
- Communicate all health and safety news, updates, and concerns to all safety officers, students, coaches, staff, volunteers, and officials
- Establish policies and procedures related to athlete health and safety and review them annually
- Track and document the completion of all waivers and forms
- If an athletic healthcare provider is not on staff, identify internal and/or external resources to meet needs

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness

- An emergency action plan (EAP) provides information to ensure response to an emergency is prompt, appropriate, coordinated, and precise.
- **They should be:**
 - Facility/venue specific and developed for each sport, activity, and event with student participation
 - Reviewed annually for accuracy and potential changes to facilities and/or venue sites as well as the management of catastrophic injuries/conditions and mental health emergencies
 - Clearly visible and posted at multiple locations at the facility/venue/event site and reviewed annually by all safety officers, students, coaches, staff, volunteers, and officials

Emergency Preparedness

An EAP should include the following at minimum:

- Contact number for emergency services
- Address of facility/venue location (with specific directions if needed)
- Plan for access to the of location
- Location of emergency equipment
- Designate roles and responsibilities for other individuals (if present)

Policy and Procedure Development

Policy and Procedure Development

Athlete health and safety policy and procedure development at a minimum should include the following topics:

- Education, training, and documentation requirements for administrators, coaches, safety officers, staff, students, officials, and volunteers
- Emergency preparedness and emergency action planning
- Forms and waivers
- Healthcare services and access
- Injury and illness management
- Management of numerous catastrophic injuries, incidents, and conditions most commonly seen in sports
- Mental health services and access
- Organization/Institution specific guidelines
- Roles and responsibilities of administrators, coaches, safety officers, staff, students, officials, and volunteers
- Sport specific health and safety considerations

Conclusion

- Intramural, club, and recreational sports are an important part of the college experience for students. However, they may confer higher risks of injury to students than intercollegiate athletics, while, at times creating liability for the institution.
- The best strategy for institutions to reduce risk, and to protect their students is to be proactive with education, emergency planning, risk reduction and having appropriate policies and procedures in place.