

Concussion Protocol Harmonization Project: Canadian Harmonized Sport Concussion Protocol Checklist

Purpose

This checklist is a tool to help you ensure your concussion protocol aligns with the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*.

How to Use this Tool

Review your concussion protocol to see if it matches the criteria listed below. Any items you don't check off identify areas that will need to be addressed.

If you don't already have a concussion protocol drafted, use the **Canadian Harmonized Sport Concussion Protocol Template** as an example of a protocol that aligns with the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Your protocol clearly identifies sport participants with the appropriate term that is specific to your sport (i.e. participant, athlete, player)

1. PRE-SEASON EDUCATION

- Your protocol specifies a plan to provide annual pre-season concussion education to: athletes, coaches, trainers, officials, and medical staff (e.g. team physician)
- Your pre-season concussion education includes information on:
 - the definition of concussion
 - possible mechanisms of injury (i.e. how a concussion might occur)
 - common signs and symptoms
 - steps that can be taken to prevent concussions and other injuries from occurring in sport
 - what to do when an athlete suffers a suspected concussion or more serious head injury
 - what measures should be taken to ensure proper medical assessment, Return-to-School and Return-to-Sport Strategies
 - Return-to-Play medical clearance requirements
- Specifies who is responsible for implementation and decision-making regarding pre-season education

▶ **Helpful tool: Pre-Season Concussion Education Sheet**

2. HEAD INJURY RECOGNITION

- Your protocol specifies the conditions where a concussion should be suspected:
 - in any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck or body, and demonstrates ANY of the visual clues of a suspected concussion or reports ANY symptoms of a suspected concussion.
 - If a player reports ANY concussion symptoms to one of their peers or if one of their peers witnesses an athlete exhibiting any of the visual signs of a suspected concussion
- Your protocol acknowledges all stakeholders (athletes, parents, coaches, officials, spectators) are responsible for recognizing and report of athletes who demonstrate signs of a head injury or who report concussion symptoms
- References the Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5)
- Specifies “Red Flag” symptoms that may indicate more serious injury (including convulsions, worsening headaches, vomiting, or neck pain)
- Specifies who is responsible for implementation and decision-making regarding head injury recognition, including player removal for medical assessment

3. ONSITE MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

- Your protocol specifies that (where possible) a multifaceted assessment by qualified onsite licensed healthcare professionals be initiated using a tool that considers multiple domains that may be affected by a concussion (i.e. SCAT5 or Child SCAT5).
- If no licensed health professionals are present, the CRT5 is used for the purposes of recognition and removal, and medical assessment is performed as per section 4 below.
- Lists the conditions under which emergency medical services are activated (i.e. loss of consciousness or where a more serious head or spine injury are suspected)
- Further medical assessment is then carried out by a physician (see section 4 below)
- Specifies who is responsible for implementation and decision-making for onsite medical assessment

4. MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

- Your protocol specifies medical follow-up with a physician (or other licensed healthcare professional as per your sport policy), and this includes a multifaceted assessment
- Specifies who is responsible for implementation and decision-making for medical assessment

5. CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

- An initial period of 24-48 hours of cognitive and physical rest is implemented
- Following the initial period of rest, individuals gradually resume activity as tolerated
- A gradual return to school strategy and return to sport strategy are implemented.
- Your protocol specifies that return to school must happen before return to sport
- A *Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy* is included
- Specifies who is responsible for implementation and decision-making regarding concussion management

▶ Helpful tool: Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy Adaptation Tool

6. MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONCUSSION CARE

- If an athlete is not recovering in the initial days to weeks following a concussion, consultation by a physician with expertise in concussion and access to a multidisciplinary care team is recommended.
- Ongoing and regular contact should occur between the physician and the care team.
- Specifies implementation and decision-making regarding multidisciplinary concussion care.

7. RETURN TO SPORT

- Return to sport does not occur until medical clearance by the physician.
- Additional considerations relevant to your sport are taken into account.
- Specifies implementation and decision-making regarding return to sport