



# Concussion Protocol and Policy

## Introduction

- A. Cheer Manitoba encourages all individuals involved in the sport of cheerleading to educate themselves on the subject of concussions. In support of this, Cheer Manitoba is following the lead of Sport Manitoba and is adhering to all of the recommendations set forth by them.
- B. Sport Manitoba is committed to increasing education and awareness that will assist in gaining the knowledge and skills required to ensure the safety of athletes. Sport Manitoba is working with Provincial Sport Organizations to establish protocols and consistent information. We all need to work together to ensure a safe sport environment. <https://www.sportmanitoba.ca/resources/concussion-information/>

## Purpose

- A. This document is designed to provide guidance to all Cheer Manitoba member organizations responsible for operating, regulating or planning cheerleading-based events with a risk of concussion to participants in the development, establishment and implementation of policies, procedures and programs for the prevention, early recognition, treatment, and education of sport and recreation related concussions and head injuries.

## Concussion Policy

- A. Cheer Manitoba is committed to maintaining the health of the community and believes that participating in the activities organized by Cheer Manitoba or its members can lead to better health. Our activities, as do most physical activities, have an inherent risk of concussion. Cheer Manitoba recognizes that concussions are a significant public health issue because of their short, and long-term, consequences. Cheer Manitoba therefore enacts this Policy and related protocols as tools to help prevent, recognize and properly treat concussions that may occur in our activities.
- B. Cheer Manitoba will endeavor to have all participants follow all treatment protocols, return-to-learn protocols and return-to-play protocols. The proper treatment of a concussion is more important than participation in any sport/recreation/activity/work/school during the healing process.

## Definitions

- A. In this policy, Concussion means the definition of concussion from 2017 by the Concussion in Sport Group (CISG) during the 5th International Consensus Conference on Concussion in Sport in Berlin.

*Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces.*

- B. In plain language, a concussion:
- is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g. headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioral (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep)
  - may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull
  - can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness)
  - cannot normally be seen on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs
  - the clinical signs and symptoms cannot be explained by drugs, alcohol, medication use, other injuries (such as cervical injuries, peripheral vestibular dysfunction etc..) or other comorbidities (eg. psychological factors) or coexisting medication conditions (*British Journal of Sport Medicine 2017:51:838-847*)
- C. “Suspected Concussion” means the recognition that an individual appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion or is exhibiting unusual behavior that may be the result of concussion.
- D. “Concussion Diagnosis” means a clinical **diagnosis** made by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. It is **critical** that an individual with a suspected concussion be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

## Stages of Concussion Management

### Education

1. Cheer Manitoba will provide a pocket recognition tool (see Appendix A) through this Policy.
2. Cheer Manitoba will see that every athlete, parent, Official, Coach, etc. has access to the resources for concussion education workshops and/or online education.
3. Sport Manitoba and the Sport Medicine and Science Council of Manitoba have partnered to offer concussion workshops to educate athletes, coaches, parents, and all members of the sports community on concussion recognition. These courses are aligned with the standardized sport-specific concussion protocols approved by Sport Manitoba and Manitoba’s Provincial Sport Organizations. The course will address many questions on what a concussion is, how to spot the signs and symptoms, what to do, how to prevent future concussions, and the proper steps to return to the field of play.  
<https://www.sportmed.mb.ca/concussion-workshop/>

Education will include the following topics:

1. Physiology of a concussion
2. Recognition of signs and symptoms of a concussion
3. What to do if a more serious head/neck injury is suspected
4. Return to learn protocol following a concussion/return to play protocols following a concussion

5. Guidance on the use of the Sport Manitoba Concussion Education Sheet, Medical Assessment Letter, and Medical Clearance Letter
6. Review of Sport Manitoba’s stance on baseline testing in youth
7. Prevention

## **APPENDIX A - SCAT 5 RECOGNITION TOOL**



## **APPENDIX B – CONCUSSION ACTION PLAN**

### **STEP 1: RECOGNIZE AND REMOVE**

If at any time it is suspected an athlete has sustained a concussion or a head injury;

1. The Event Producer or coach during competitions OR the coach during any other activity (practices, training etc.), immediately stop all activity.
2. Remove the athlete from activity space if safe and able.
3. Reference the SCAT 5 RECOGNITION TOOL (Appendix A) and assess for signs, symptoms and/or RED FLAG SIGNS. With RED FLAG SIGNS, activate Emergency Medical Services.

### **STEP 2: COMMUNICATE WITH PARENT/CAREGIVER**

1. Contact the athlete’s parent/caregiver as soon as possible to inform them of the injury.
  - a. In the event an athlete’s parent/caregiver cannot be reached, call the athlete’s emergency contact number and educate this person as well.
  - b. The athletic therapist, doctor, coach, team staff, nurse or other appropriate administrative personnel should ensure the caregiver is a responsible adult capable of monitoring the individual and who understands the CAP before allowing the individual to be released.
  - c. Additional steps to take are:
    - Continue efforts to reach the parent/caregiver.
    - Athletes with suspected concussion/head injuries are not permitted to drive themselves.

**STEP 3: REFER**

NO RED FLAG SIGNS PRESENT: Get the athlete assessed by a physician in a timely manner (less than 48 hours post injury). Continue to monitor the athlete, as red flag signs can take up to 48 hours to appear. Give them the Sport Manitoba Concussion Assessment Form to complete.

If RED FLAG SIGNS or symptoms do appear, activate Emergency Medical Services.

**STEP 4: RECOVER**

If there is a diagnosed concussion, seek medical guidance when working through Return to Learn/Return to Play Guidelines during recovery. Must not return to practice without the completion of the Sport Manitoba Medical Clearance Letter.

**Review and Approval**

- A. This policy will be reviewed annually.
  
- B. This Policy was approved by the Organization's Board of Directors November 5, 2020