



# **GRIDIRON AUSTRALIA**

## **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

## **Risk Management:**

The following information is for Gridiron Australia (GA) Affiliated Leagues, Associations and Clubs to identify, assess and form strategies relating to *risk management*.

It covers a wide range of issues relating to safety, education, insurance and the law.

It provides practical examples and guidelines that can be easily incorporated into the daily running and maintenance procedures of the organisation.

The information below should be treated as a guide to establishing a *risk management* philosophy within your league, association or club. Consideration should be given to your particular league, association or club's risks and exposures when working through the process.

### **What is risk management?**

Risk management relates to the process of making decisions that will help to avoid and reduce the impact of unexpected/undesired outcomes, accidents, misadventures and complaints. All administrators need to be fully aware of what can go wrong at a league, association or club and to create strategies to eliminate or minimise risk. To keep things running effectively many of these decisions need to become implemented as rules for the running of sporting organisations at all levels.

### **Who is affected?**

- Event organisers
- Leagues, Associations and Clubs
- Parents and Minders
- Venue providers/local government bodies
- Players or participants
- The manager or coach of a team or individual
- Referees or other match professionals
- The occupier of sport's premises
- Spectators
- Committees

- Committee members

## **PART A: NEGLIGENCE. WHAT IS YOUR DUTY OF CARE?**

Duty of care is breached if that person is negligent in failing to take precautions against a risk, where the risk was foreseeable. (That is, it is a risk the person knows of or ought to have known).

### **All administrators should work to:**

- Provide a safe place or premises where the sport is played;
- Provide an adequate system of safety standards to be met by players;
- Provide safe and adequate equipment, and
- Provide adequate instruction and supervision for the playing of gridiron.

### **Duty of care: Volunteers**

A volunteer is generally not liable in any civil proceeding for anything done or not done in good faith by him or her in providing a service in community work organised by a community organisation. Community work can include work that is done for the purpose of sport or recreation.

### **Duty of care: Event Organisers (League, Club, Association, Individual Or Company)**

Liability can attach to sports organisers in a number of ways, especially in contract and in tort. Failure by organisers to honour their legal responsibilities can result in liability to compensate those injured either physically or financially.

The organisers of a sporting event should ensure that the event is held in the safest possible conditions.

### **Event organisers:**

- have a duty of care to call off an event if the weather conditions jeopardise the health of the participants;
- should seek medical opinion as to what other environmental hazards can be taken into account to reduce the risk of harm to the participants;
- have an obligation to ensure that the spectators are safe from injury;
- have an obligation to ensure that injury prevention strategies are in place as part of their duty of care;

- are obliged to educate their coaches, trainers and athletes on sporting injury prevention, and
- have a duty to disclose information which may affect participants.

### **Duty of care: The Occupier**

An occupier of premises owes a duty to take such care that any person at a sports venue will not be injured by reason of the state of the premises.

The occupier should:

- provide a first-aid facility;
- provide ambulance access that is clear and unlocked during matches and training;
- have an established emergency evacuation procedure;
- provide a safe training and playing surface;
- provide hygienic wash facilities;
- provide hygienic, non-confined change facilities;
- regularly attend to the maintenance and upkeep of the venue to minimise risks;
- obtain the relevant insurance to protect members, players, officials and spectators;
- conduct regular independent safety audits, and
- provide adequate security for the protection of players, match officials and other spectators.

### **Duty of care: Players or Participants**

It is almost inevitable that sport's players will injure one another. This arises in contact sports and from competitiveness in sport. At the same time, players or competitors owe each other a duty of care.

Players:

- have a duty to not act recklessly and endanger other players;
- need to note the fact that if the opponent has some special condition, this does not necessarily diminish the duty of care owed, and
- extra care needs to be taken when dealing with children. Persons in charge of children owe a duty to protect them from foreseeable dangers, whatever their source.

### **Duty of care: The Manager or Coach**

The manager/coach may be liable in circumstances that involve the following issues:

- allowing and encouraging players to use dangerous techniques;
- the protection of players;
- encouraging aggression, and
- drugs (legal and illegal).
- playing/training on unsafe surfaces
- playing injured/sick players, without written clearance from a medical practitioners or a parent.

Managers and coaches have an obligation to ensure that all steps are taken to avoid injury. This means incorporating:

- appropriate sports selection and grading;
- appropriate preparation and correct coaching techniques;
- the use of protective equipment;
- proper supervision and refereeing;
- a practice of ensuring players have completely recovered from injury before returning to play;
- adequate self-education, and
- inspecting the surface before playing and training.

Managers and coaches should keep up to date with injury prevention and basic first aid.

All coaches should complete a course in Sports First Aid. Coaches should insist that their sport trainers hold at least a Level 1 Sports Trainers Qualification and undertake ongoing re-accreditation in order to keep up to date with skills.

### **Duty of care: Umpires or other Match Professionals**

The umpire owes a duty of care to the players to enforce the rules of gridiron. It is also their responsibility to:

- protect players from dangerous techniques;
- inspect surfaces before each game or as conditions change i.e. following heavy rain;
- correct completion of paper work, and
- understand procedures in case of an emergency.

The umpires are the risk managers on match day and as so must enforce the associations risk management procedures in conjunction with club officials.

### **Duty of care: Spectators**

Spectators have no active part in the game and should identify and follow the regulations adopted by the venue providers and/or occupier in relation to:

- first aid;
- emergency procedures;
- weather;
- consumption of alcohol;
- exits, and
- prohibited zones.

### **Duty of care. Committee members**

Committee members should implement these suggested guidelines.  
(NB: Committee members of unincorporated associations may carry personal liability for the acts or omissions of the committee).

## **HAZARD IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL:**

### **First Aid**

First aid is a system for the emergency treatment of illness and injury and includes the following elements:

- emergency treatment;
- maintenance of records;
- redressing of a minor injury;
- recognising and reporting health hazards, and
- participation in safety programs.

Event organisers and venue providers, in consultation with first aid providers, should consider the following to determine first aid requirements for their facility. This review process should consider the following:

- first aid facilities;
- content of first aid kits;
- number and location of first aid kits;
- advice and training on first aid assistance;
- the number and training level of first aid providers;
- languages in which information should be provided, and
- medical forms containing health information of participants.

## **First Aid Facilities**

Appropriate first aid facilities and training should be determined according to the size and layout of the venue. Assess the size and layout of the place of activity and identify:

- the nature of hazards and severity of risk within the sporting activity;
- the distance an injured or ill person has to be transported to first aid;
- establish a routine for cleaning and checking equipment;
- the ease with which this can be undertaken;
- the level of first aid available throughout the place of activity, and
- requirement of a stretcher and knowing its location

## **First Aid Kits**

It is recommended that kits include as a minimum:

- emergency services telephone numbers and addresses;
- names and telephone numbers of club or venue first aid providers;
- a first aid guide;
- individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressing;
- sterile eye pads;
- sterile pads for serious wounds;
- triangular bandages;
- clearly identified container with a white cross on a green background;
- list of kit contents;
- reusable – instant icepack;
- single use splinter probes;
- plastic bags;
- paper towel;
- note pad and pencil;
- safety pins;
- sterile un-medicated wound dressing;
- adhesive tape;
- rubber thread or crepe bandage;
- disposable gloves, and
- sharp – blunt scissors.

## **First Aid Officers**

First aid officers are responsible for taking positive action to prevent further injury and to render first aid management in accordance with their approved training, until medical help arrives.

Qualifications and Allowances

To be registered as a First Aid Officer, the requirement is to hold a certificate of proficiency in first aid issued within the previous three years by an approved State Training Board accredited agency such as St. John Ambulance Australia.

On appointment, each First Aid Officer should be provided with a copy of the Association policies on first aid, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis-B.

The First Aid Officer should have access to player's medical records, so they can action appropriate first aid when required.

### Number, Competencies and Distribution of First Aid Officers

The appropriate number and competencies required of first aid officers will vary from one facility to the next. Names, locations and phone numbers of First Aid Officers should be indicated on notice boards by a conspicuous sign or a white cross with green background which must be displayed in a position clear of general notices.

### First Aid Records

First Aid Officers are required to maintain a written record in a format that suits your situation of all first aid treatments. Records of injury and illness are necessary to:

- provide information which may assist in future treatment of the injured person;
- serve as a data source for building a statistical picture on the occurrence of accidents/incidents;
- provide data for evaluation of possible health effects when a relationship between exposure and illness is possible;
- monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken to control or, where possible, eliminate hazards, and
- all personal records are confidential and must be locked away.

### Medical Forms

These forms should be correctly filled out containing information about the player and any health or physical problems that can help the coach, manager or club official with training or playing restrictions and help with the administering of first aid. The form should contain but not limited to:

- allergies
- medical conditions (e.g. A.D.H.T., epilepsy)
- ambulance coverage (yes or no). What to do if no coverage?
- contact telephone numbers in case of an emergency
- injuries or permanent restrictions to training or playing



The medical form should include a statement permitting the club doctor and first aid personnel having access to the information contained in the medical form. A copy of the forms should be left at the club, locked away and a copy kept with the coach or manager to help with the administering of first aid.

## **Emergency Plan and Procedures**

There should be a plan of the venue showing the location of:

- fire bores and hoses;
- hydro points;
- hose reels;
- fire extinguishers, by type;
- spare equipment;
- pumps;
- exits, and
- the first aid room.

Adequately fixed or portable fire fighting equipment should be provided in accordance with recommended guidelines of the Fire Authority. Ensure that emergency instructions displayed include:

- emergency telephone numbers;
- fire suppression equipment supply contacts;
- emergency evacuation procedures, and emergency evacuation assembly points;
- ensure staff and/or club and team officials know and understand the emergency evacuation procedure.

## **Hygiene**

Appropriate policies and procedures must be applied to change rooms, in reference to dimensions, contents, mode of cleaning, toilets, in reference to mode of cleaning and also liquid refreshments.

## **Safe Playing Environment**

Inspections are a useful method in identifying risks and must become an integral part of the pre-match procedure by the games officials, both captains or coaches or a designated team representative's responsibility prior to the commencement of play. Everyone involved in the inspection must have a clear understanding of the inspection procedure or are guided by the associations risk management policy.

A general inspection may identify normal wear, tear and general deterioration of physical assets and features such as equipment, facilities, grounds, waterways and pathways.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

These questions should be considered in relation to personal protective equipment:

- is the use of protective equipment required for any operations or areas?
- if so, are there written procedures covering the specifications, purchase, storage, maintenance, issue and correct use of the protective equipment?
- are participants trained in the use of the protective equipment?

Umpires and coaches should:

- instruct participants in the correct use and maintenance of personal protective equipment, as directed by the manager;
- ensure that personal protective equipment is worn by participants as specified in the rules of the game;
- conduct periodic checks to ensure that personal protective equipment is being used as specified, and
- report to the appropriate association, club official or parent any personal protective equipment considered inadequate protection.

Participants should:

- use personal protective equipment as specified or directed;
- take care of personal protective equipment and ensure that it is maintained in a serviceable condition;
- store personal protective equipment as instructed;
- report any problems with personal protective equipment, and
- notify coaches or managers if they aren't wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment or have forgotten to bring it.

## **Annual Inspection**

A detailed inspection of your ground(s), including all components and installations, should be arranged annually to check the various safety aspects on and around the playing surface.

## UV Exposure

The environment can significantly affect athletes and performance. Participating in activities in a variety of environmental conditions can be safe, provided one understands the risk and is properly prepared. Effects of competing in excessive temperatures (bearing in mind that surface temperature is usually considerably higher than mean air temperatures by virtue of confinement of space, interaction of competitors and crowd 'warming') are well documented with associated symptomatology including heat exhaustion, dehydration, heat stroke and even skin cancer.

Consideration should be made in your first aid policy to these exposures and also in the education of your players.

## Blood Rule

Association / Committees (members) should;

- adopt a broad based 'blood rule' and police it
- appoint a trained first aid officer
- regular and routine maintenance ensuring;
  - a) clean and tidy dressing rooms;
  - b) regular sanitation of toilets and shower facilities;
  - c) routine laundry procedures regarding all linen/clothing (cold water soaking of contaminated clothes prior to a hot detergent wash)

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- supply soap, detergent, disinfectant, gloves, leak-proof plastic bags, paper hand towels, brooms, refuse disposal bins (including a 'sharps' container)
- provide a first aid kit
- provide latex disposable gloves
- display a 'blood rule' and first aid policy
- display an emergency plan and hygiene policy
- provide spare clothing in the event of soiling.

Umpires or other match professionals/Manager or Coach

- acknowledge display of plans and policies.
- report all open cuts and abrasions immediately to first aid officer.
- not allow players to continue playing if there is blood visible.
- not allow players on the field until the match official is satisfied that the blood has been cleaned.

First Aid Officer

Should have a thorough understanding of the club's/association's blood policy and as such should follow the rules.

- wearing non-utility gloves (latex), clean the wound with soap and water;
- bloodstained clothes should be changed for clean ones;
- if blood gets on skin, wash well with soap and water;
- if eyes are contaminated, rinse thoroughly with the eyes open, with water or saline;
- if blood gets in mouth, spit it out and rinse the mouth repeatedly.
- in the event of uncontrolled bleeding the player must not be allowed to continue and should be treated by a paramedic or physician.
- where there is an additional concern about infection, medical advice should be sought from a physician or someone clinically experienced in the management of infectious diseases.
- contaminated material should be contained in an appropriate waste contamination receptacle and disposed of under local health regulations.

Player or participants

- take responsibility for hygiene and personal care;
- vaccinate against Hepatitis A & B
- players with a past history of infection should obtain confidential advice and clearance from a General Practitioner.

The overriding management skills in prevention and control arise from an understanding of hygiene and first aid and the promotion of awareness through education.

### **Proper Distribution of Alcohol**

Clubs must follow the relevant state's safe serving of alcohol policy which is a requirement of their licence. Clubs are to ensure that they meet their liquor licensing requirements including time and day restrictions and serving to minors.

A person serving alcohol to another person with the knowledge that that person could place themselves in a position of danger should they be intoxicated upon leaving the establishment where the alcohol was supplied will be considered negligent if they continue to supply the person with the means of greater intoxication without regard to the danger to which they are thereby contributing.