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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Ohio's Concussion Law

What is the purpose of the new concussion law in Ohio?

The bill promotes the protection of young athletes involved in sports activities at the youth, middle school, and high school levels. The law has 3 main components:

- 1. Education on the signs and symptoms and knowledge of concussions for participants, parents, coaches, and officials in youth and interscholastic sports.
- 2. Protocol for removal from and return to athletic activity if a concussion is suspected.
- Definition of licensed healthcare provider who can make medical decisions related to returnto-play.

When does the law go into effect?

April 26, 2013.

Who does the law apply to?

Public and private schools, chartered and non-chartered non-public schools, and youth sports organizations (YSOs). Please read the legislation for specific definitions of these entities. The law outlines slightly different requirements for interscholastic athletics than for youth sports organizations; therefore, please see the separate sections outlining each in this document.

What happens if a young athlete exhibits the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

The new legislation states that if an athlete exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion while practicing or participating in an athletic event, the athlete will be removed from participation by his/her coach, the referee, or a supervising YSO official. The athlete will not be allowed to return-to-play on the same day he or she was removed from activity under any circumstances. The athlete also cannot return to play until both of the following conditions are met:

- 1. The athlete is evaluated by a physician or other licensed medical provider authorized by the organization in which they are participating.
- 2. The athlete provides written clearance from the medical professional that it is safe to return to practice and competition.

Who can make medical decisions related to return-to-play?

A physician (which is defined as a person who is authorized to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery, i.e. MD or DO) or other licensed healthcare professional authorized by the school district or YSO who has received a referral from a physician or is working in consultation/collaboration with a physician, or is supervised by a physician.

What does the law say about liability?

The following entities are **not liable** for damages in a civil action for providing services or performing duties in relation to the bill, **unless the act or omission constitutes willful or wanton misconduct.**



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- School district, member of school district board of education, and/or school district employee or volunteer (including coach or referee)
- Youth sports organization, youth sports official, employee or volunteer (including coach or referee)

REGULATIONS FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

What documentation does an interscholastic sports organization have to collect from participants, parents, and guardians as proof of concussion education?

Interscholastic sports organizations must collect a signed concussion/head injury information sheet from all athletes who wish to participate in an athletic activity. A parent or guardian will be required to sign the form. Forms must be on file with an organization official before the individual is allowed to participate in any athletic activity. The signed form is valid for one year. Please note that a new form must be completed for each sport in which the athlete participates, even if the athlete participates in multiple interscholastic sports during the same school year. The information sheet is available on the Ohio Department of Health's website. No alternative forms may be used.

What education must interscholastic coaches complete?

Interscholastic coaches must hold a Pupil Activity Permit. Coaches who are renewing this permit on or after the law's effective date will have to supply proof of completion of one of the online concussion training modules provided by the Ohio Department of Health on their website or alternative approved training program on concussions. First-time coaches applying for a Pupil Activity Permit will also be required to complete a training program specifically focused on brain trauma and brain injury management in order to obtain the permit.

What education must interscholastic referees complete?

Referees must either submit proof of a Pupil Activity Permit or complete one of the online training modules provided by the Ohio Department of Health or another approved alternative training program every 3 years.

REGULATIONS FOR YOUTH SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS (YSOs)

What is the definition of a "youth sports organization" (YSO)?

An YSO is defined as a public or nonpublic entity that organizes an athletic activity in which the athletes are not more than 19 years of age and are required to pay a fee to participate or whose cost is sponsored by a business or nonprofit organization.

What education does a youth sports organization have to provide to participants, parents, and guardians?

Youth sports organizations must provide a concussion education sheet to each participant's parent/guardian every year before the child begins participating in the athletic activity. A new education sheet must also be distributed for each sport in which the athlete participates.



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What education must YSO coaches and officials complete?

Coaches and referees working with YSOs must either have a valid Pupil Activity Permit or present evidence that they have completed one of the online concussion training modules from the Ohio Department of Health's website.

INFORMATION ON TRAINING PROGRAMS

What is the Pupil Activity Permit and training course? How long is the permit valid?

A person involved in a school-based pupil activity program that involves athletics, routine or regular physical activity, or activities with health and safety considerations is required by the Ohio Department of Education to hold a Pupil Activity Permit. The permit is obtained by attending and successfully completing a Pupil Activity Permit training course. Courses can be held only by providers approved to teach the course by the Ohio Department of Education. The course is 2 hours long. The permit is valid for three years. More information about the course can be found on the Ohio Department of Education website.

How much does the Pupil Activity Permit training course cost?

There are two costs for the program. First, there is a \$45 processing fee assessed by the state of Ohio. Additionally, approved course providers may charge an additional fee. Nationwide Children's charges \$15 (therefore, total course cost is \$45 + \$15 = \$60 if taken through Nationwide Children's).

Where can I take the Pupil Activity Permit training course?

Nationwide Children's Sports Medicine provides these courses multiple times a year. For more information, visit our website at http://www.nationwidechildrens.org/education-classes and search "Pupil Activity Permit." Courses are planned for July 24 and October 30, 2013. Other course providers may be searched on the Ohio Department of Education's website.

What are the online training modules? How long are they valid?

There are currently two online training modules provided via the Ohio Department of Health's website. Instructions on how to complete either of these modules are also provided on the website. Each module takes 30-60 minutes to complete and includes or is followed by test questions. Both of the online training modules are free. Either module's training will be valid for three years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Find handouts, FAQ, and information about the online training modules at the Ohio Department of Health's website: www.healthyohioprogram.org/concussion.
- To read the law, visit http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=129 HB 143.
- If after viewing the website and our FAQ you have questions about the how the law affects you and/or your organization, you can contact Nationwide Children's Sports Medicine at (614) 355-6000.

DISCLAIMER: This document should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on specific facts or circumstances. You should consult an attorney with respect to any particular issue or concern.

