



## WELLINGTON ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

### Concussion Policy

#### Purpose

The purpose of this Wellington Ice Hockey Association Policy is to:

- a) Provide guiding principles and advice regarding the management of concussion in the context of ice hockey; and
- b) Mandate the process by which a player may continue to play in a game or return to play, following involvement in an incident which requires assessment as to whether a suspected concussion has occurred.

This policy is not intended to be a substitution for medical advice, the advice within this policy is of a general nature only.

The guidelines are for players, coaches, team managers, on-ice officials, and parents/caregivers and should be understood and followed by all parties for the benefit and welfare of the players.

#### Definition

Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as *“a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces either directly or indirectly upon the head”*. (McCrary P, Meeuwisse WH, Dvorak J, et al. *Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 5th International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Berlin, November 2016*).

Simply stated, a concussion may be defined as an alteration in the mental state of the player for a variable period of time, that may, or may not, result in a loss of consciousness.

#### Recognise, Remove & Refer

When a concussion, or possible concussion, occurs it is important to take action and to get help. The most important steps in the early identification of concussion are to recognise a possible injury and remove the player from the game/training/activity.

*In cases of uncertainty always adopt a conservative approach – **If in doubt, sit them out.***

Follow these three steps if a player experiences a blow to the head, face, neck or body and you suspect a concussion.

- 1) **Recognise** signs and symptoms of a concussion
- 2) **Remove** the player from the game / training / activity, even if they insist, they are OK.
- 3) **Refer** - the player to be checked out by a medical professional.

*\*only a medical doctor can provide assessment and management for concussion.*

### Symptoms of a Concussion:

Concussion presents with a range of signs and/or symptoms that may or may not include loss of consciousness. It is important to remember that not every sign and symptom will be present in every case and signs and symptoms may have delayed onset.

Physical	Cognitive (Thinking)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Pressure in the head</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Blurred / double vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light or sound</li><li>• Ringing in the ears</li><li>• Balance problems</li><li>• Tired or low energy</li><li>• Drowsiness / feeling in a fog</li><li>• “Don’t feel right”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slower thinking</li><li>• Feeling confused</li><li>• Problems concentrating</li><li>• Problems remembering</li><li>• Appears confused or disoriented</li></ul>
Sleep-related	Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sleeping more or less than usual</li><li>• Having a hard time falling asleep</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irritability (easily upset or angered)</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Nervous or anxious</li></ul>

### Red Flags

“Red flags” may mean the person has a more serious injury. Treat red flags as an emergency and call 111.

Red flags include:

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness (knocked out)
- Vomiting more than once
- Increasingly restless, agitated or aggressive
- Getting more and more confused

If the person is unconscious or is unable to move all or some of their limbs, or is complaining of neck pain do not remove helmet or any other equipment:

**Call 111 immediately** · Do not move the person (unless it’s dangerous to leave them where they are)

### Remove From Play

A player should never return to play on the day of a concussive injury.

A player with a suspected concussion should be immediately removed from the game/training/activity and should not be returned to game/training/activity until they are assessed by a qualified medical doctor.

Only qualified medical practitioners (doctors) should diagnose whether a concussion has occurred or provide advice as to whether the player can return to play. All players should be referred for a medical assessment.

A player may not return to play until clearance has been obtained by the qualified medical practitioners.

Parents/Guardians/Players are obliged to inform WIHA of any concussions that have occurred outside of ice hockey, so that the WIHA can take appropriate measures to protect the player per the concussion policy.

### **Return to Play**

It is the League Director's / General Manager / Head Coach responsibility to make sure the concussed player does not play or train again until the player receives medical clearance from a medical professional and provides a medical certificate stating as such.

The safety of the player is the priority and must NOT be compromised. The decision regarding return to play and clearance to return to restricted activity should always be made by a medical doctor. The decision regarding the timing of return to game/training/activity should always be made by a medical doctor.

"All players are required to follow NZIHF Concussion Policy in order to return from concussion to play" (<https://nzicehockey.co.nz/assets/Uploads/NZIHF-Concussion-Policy-2019.pdf>)

### **Procedure**

#### ***A. During a Game:***

A player who is suspected of sustaining a concussion as a result of sustaining a blow to the head or other impact that causes concern for head or neck injury, shall be immediately removed from participation for the remainder of the game. Removal can be at the request of a coach, official, team manager, parent/guardian, or the player.

Game officials must record the player's name and number on the game sheet, noting that the player left the game as a result of a blow to the head or other impact that caused concern for head or neck injury.

Note - in case of the Super League, the Super League coaches will be responsible for recording details as required including the player's name and number.

If during a game, a player's coach or team manager observes concussion-like symptoms, they must ensure the player does not return to play and they must report the injury to game officials to be recorded on the game sheet.

The Coach / Team Manager / Player must report the incident to the respective League Directors or General Manager or WIHA Head Coach.

***B. During Training:***

If a player sustains a blow to the head or other impact that causes concern for head or neck injury during training, the coach(s) must remove the player from the training.

The player in question (or the player's parents/guardians if 17 and under) must be informed about the concussion injury or suspected concussion injury. It is the player's (or the player's parents/guardians if 17 and under) responsibility to ensure the player is evaluated by a medical professional. The player (or the player's parents/guardians if 17 and under) should also be informed that they must produce a medical certificate of clearance before returning to any games/trainings/activities.

<b>WIHA Board:</b>	
<b>Policy Approval date:</b>	<b>31/10/2022</b>
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	<b>November 2023</b>