

CONCUSSION QUESTION AND ANSWER SHEET

1. *Where can I find a copy of the new Concussion Law?*

The law is titled "Student Athletes: Concussions and Head Injuries". It is listed under Indiana Code as IC 20-34-7 and can be found at the following site:

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title20/ar34/ch7.html>

2. *Where can I find the forms and more information regarding this new law?*

The forms and information regarding this law can be found on the Indiana Department of Education Learning Connection under the community entitled "IDOE – Concussion and Head Injury in Student Athletes".

3. *Does this law apply to all students?*

No, this law does not apply to all students. The law only applies to students that are in grades 9-12, who are participating in an interscholastic or intramural sport.

4. *What is the definition of an interscholastic sport?*

An interscholastic sport is defined as one that is sanctioned by the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA). These include the following for boys: baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, swimming, tennis, track and wrestling; and for girls: basketball, cross country, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and volleyball.

5. *What is the definition of an intramural sport?*

IHSAA states "an intramural contest occurs when all participants on both teams are members of one school".

6. *With regard to the Concussion Law, what other types of teams could be considered as an intramural sport?*

Any team, comprised of student athletes in grades 9-12, that is considered a "school-sponsored" team or whose coach is paid, compensated or officially recognized by the school administrator would be considered as an intramural sport.

7. *Is cheerleading considered an interscholastic or intramural sport?*

In Indiana, cheerleading is considered an intramural sport, and thus would apply under this law. In addition, cheerleading is recognized as an interscholastic sport at the federal level by the National Federation of High School Sports.

8. *Are club sports considered intramural sports?*

Club sports would be considered as intramural sports if all the participants of both teams are members of one school, or if the coach of the club sport is paid, compensated or officially recognized by the school administrator.

9. *What about other age students or those that do not fall under the legal definitions of this law?*

For a student athlete, of any age or sport, the recommendation would be for the adults in charge to take concussions and head injuries seriously. If a concussion or head injury is suspected for any student, the recommendation would be to remove the student from play, notify the student's parents and recommend that the student be evaluated by a licensed health care provider.

10. *Does a student athlete have to lose consciousness for a concussion to be suspected?*

No, if a student athlete exhibits any of the signs or symptoms listed on the fact sheet, even if it is just one of the symptoms, he/she should be suspected of having a concussion.

11. *What should be done if a student athlete does lose consciousness, even for a brief time, after a blow to the head or body?*

Losing consciousness is one of the danger signs when a concussion is suspected. A student athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body he/she exhibits any of the danger signs listed on the fact sheet.

12. *Can an athletic trainer do an initial assessment of a student athlete that has had a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body?*

Yes, if a student athlete has had a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body, the student may be assessed by an athletic trainer, if available. The athletic trainer can make a first assessment of the student athlete at the time of injury. If the student exhibits any of the danger signs associated with a concussion, the student athlete should receive immediate medical attention.

If during this initial assessment, the student athlete does not exhibit any of the danger signs associated with a concussion, but does exhibit any (even one) of the signs or symptoms of a concussion, a concussion should be suspected. At that time, **the student athlete should be removed from play, the athlete's parents should be notified, and the athlete should not return to play until he/she is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries, and the "Concussion Evaluation and Release to Play Form for Licensed Health Care Providers" is completed.**

13. *Can EMS personnel do an initial assessment for a student athlete that has had a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body?*

No, if EMS personnel are called to the scene, they will document the observed and reported signs and symptoms of the student athlete and provide care following the protocols established by their medical director. If called to the scene, EMS personnel will not determine whether a student athlete may return to play, but will transport a student athlete who is suspected of having a concussion or head injury to the nearest hospital.

14. *Are there important legal considerations for the phrase – “licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries”?*

Yes, there are three distinct criteria a person must meet in order to qualify under this definition:

- Must have a license given by a governmental agency that regulates a specific profession
- Must be listed in Indiana Code as a health care provider
- Must have training in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries

By law, for a person to be able to sign a written clearance in order for the athlete to return to play after a suspected concussion, the person must meet **all** three of the above criteria.

15. *Can an athletic trainer write a written clearance to return to play for a student athlete who is suspected of having a concussion?*

No, an athletic trainer is a licensed health care professional who works under the direction of a licensed health care provider. Because an athletic trainer does not meet the criteria for the definition as a licensed health care provider, they are not allowed to write a written clearance for a student athlete to return to play following a concussion or head injury.

16. *Can emergency medical personnel write a written clearance to return to play for a student athlete who is suspected of having a concussion?*

No, emergency personnel are certified not licensed health care providers. Emergency medical personnel (EMT's and Paramedics) do not meet the criteria for the definition as a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries.

17. *What training is necessary for a licensed health care provider? If it requires special training how will I know who has that specialized training?*

The law states that the student athlete release to return to play form should be signed by a "licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries". Several concussion specialists are offering training for health care providers who are interested in participating in their programs. However, there is no definition in the law of what constitutes a "trained" provider. Thus, it will be up to the individual health care provider to determine if he/she feels qualified or if he/she would rather refer the student to a specialist. Additionally, a parent could request a specialist or a second opinion if they felt this was needed.

There are two programs that offer training for health care providers:

Athletic Concussion Alliance - www.acaindiana.com/clinicians

Indiana Sports Concussion Network - <http://indianasportsconcussionnetwork.com/clinicians.html>

18. *If I have further questions regarding the Concussion Law, who could I contact?*

You may contact Jolene Bracale at the Indiana Department of Education. She can be reached at 317-232-0541 or jbracale@doe.in.gov.