

DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Injuries, sudden illnesses and other critical incidents do not often occur during school activities, nor do situations that require the help of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Personnel. **However, it is important for every school to have an emergency action plan for faculty and staff members to follow should emergencies occur. This plan is especially important should the emergency occur during non-school hours, such as after school activities.** The following people should be involved in developing an emergency action plan: the athletic director, school nurse, licensed athletic trainer (*if available*), coaches and advisors, maintenance personnel, clerical staff, athletes, parents, security personnel/police and EMS personnel. The emergency procedure should be well planned **AND** practiced before each season or major event being held. **Basic emergency action plans include the following elements: personnel, communications, supplies, and transportation.** The following suggestions may be helpful to schools in evaluating and/or developing emergency procedures.

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PERSONNEL

It would be ideal for each school to have a Licensed Athletic Trainer on-site during every athletic practice and competition. In reality, that this is not possible for a variety of reasons. There are also other activities taking place after school and on weekends which require coaches and advisors to be prepared for emergencies. It is generally the coach or advisor who has the immediate responsibility to handle emergency situations that arise during activities. **Because of this, it is strongly recommended that coaches and advisors know basic first aid and CPR.**

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A good emergency action plan will identify the people responsible for the initial care of anyone who may become seriously injured or ill and for implementing the plan. The responsible party may utilize assistants, students, custodians, or EMS personnel to assist them.

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People may need to be assigned to contact EMS, calm those around the injured/ill person, meet EMS at the entrance with easiest access to the injured/ill person, clear a path for EMS personnel, contact school administrators, contact the family of the injured/ill person. A good plan assigns more than one person to each specific role in case of the absence of one individual.

COMMUNICATIONS

The emergency action plan should be very clear as to how and when to contact emergency medical personnel and communicate with spectators and team personnel who are present at the event. The plan should identify the person(s) responsible for managing communications that need to occur if a student becomes seriously injured or ill, or in the event of other critical incidents. The planning and testing of such communications should start prior to any practice or competition. The following is a list of items to be considered in planning for communications:

1) A telephone must be easily accessible any time students and their coaches may be in a building or using school transportation. Be sure a landline phone has an outside line and that people know how to access an outside line. Be sure cell phone has reception in the area the activity is taking place.

2) Emergency calling procedures and telephone numbers of emergency medical services (EMS), hospitals, police departments, fire departments, and school administrators should be posted next to all school telephones, in first aid kits, and with any first aid equipment that may be used in an emergency, i.e. AEDs. Coaches should carry a copy of the emergency calling procedures and emergency phone numbers with them so they are readily available. *A practical suggestion would be to not include administrators phone numbers on a sheet posted near public telephones.*

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3) A bull horn should be available at each event where a P.A. system is used in case of a power outage. It may be the only way of communicate with those at the event.

4) Critical incident/emergency planning information should be prepared and carried in every coach's, or advisor's, first aid kit or briefcase. This information should describe the procedures to be followed should a critical incident/emergency occur. Emergency calling procedures, emergency phone numbers and basic emergency care guidelines can also be put on a card designed to be carried in a wallet. Sample basic emergency care guidelines and calling procedures are included at the end of this document.

5) The coach or advisor of every activity should have a student Health and Injury Information / Consent for Treatment Card for each student involved in the activity (participants, managers, student helpers, etc.). This card should include any pertinent medical information about the student, and the parent's home, work & cell phone numbers. Student health and injury information cards are available to all member schools by contacting the Iowa High School Athletic Association. A sample Health and Injury Information / Consent for Treatment Card is included in the supplement of this Update.

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6) An important part of an emergency action plan is follow-up after an event occurs. Appropriate documentation (completing accident and incident reports) should be completed and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan should be conducted.

7) An often overlooked aspect of emergency action planning is how to quickly and easily communicate with a visiting school, and an injured/ill student's parents, the location nearest emergency room of hospital. One suggestion is to have the directions and phone number of nearby hospitals on a note card that could be given to an adult from the visiting school, and/or the parents of the injured/ill student, so they can take the information with them, if necessary.

SUPPLIES

Emergency supplies should include only those items coaches and advisors have the knowledge and training to use properly. Band-aids, ice packs, and

elastic wraps are among the most common supplies. A list of suggested emergency supplies is provided at the end of this document.

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TRANSPORTATION

Emergency medical services personnel should be contacted any time a student is seriously injured or ill. The use of school or personal cars to transport injured or ill students may be acceptable in some cases, but careful consideration should be given during the planning process as to the nature of the injury or illness in which it may be appropriate to transport a student via school or personal vehicle and the possibility of further harm to the student.

Emergency medical services personnel should be contacted any time a student is seriously injured or ill.

No injured or ill student should be allowed to transport him or herself, or to be transported by non-school personnel, without parental permission. If an injury is NOT serious enough to warrant the use of an ambulance, the emergency action plan should stipulate when, or if, the person responsible for the immediate care of the student should contact the student's parents and/or physician for the final decision concerning transportation. The emergency action plan should predetermine whether the coach or advisor will travel with the injured or ill student to the hospital or clinic. If the coach or advisor does travel with the injured or ill student, someone must be put in charge of the students remaining at the school. This may need to be an assistant coach, administrator, or other qualified person. If anyone other than a coach is supervising the students, the students should stop the activity and sit quietly until transportation is arranged to take them home.

No injured or ill student should be allowed to transport him/herself, or to be transported by non-school personnel, without parental permission.

Questions and comments about emergency procedures, or any other areas dealing with student-athlete's wellness, are welcome and encouraged. They should be directed to Alan Beste, LAT, Assistant Executive Director, at the Iowa High School Athletic Association, PO Box 10, Boone, IA 50036.

(515)432-2011 abeste@iahsaa.org

Sources: “Crisis Management Plan for Youth Sporting Events,” National Center for Sports Safety, Jeff Konin, PhD, PT, ATC, University of South Florida; “Developing an Emergency Action Plan,” National Center for Sports Safety; “Emergency Medical Planning,” Walker, P.J. ATC, PT. Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Centre, Des Moines, IA; “Emergency Plans Becoming the Norm,” NATA NEWS, Volume 8, 2001; Modern Principles of Athletic Training by Daniel Arnheim, Times Mirror/Mosby College Publishing, 1989; Sport First Aid, Flegel, Melinda, ATC, Human Kinetics, Champaign, IL, 1997; “Promoting Effective Emergency Action Plans,” Coaches Quarterly, Summer 2009; Sports Medicine Handbook, National Federation of State High School Associations, October 2008, The Sports Medicine Foundation of America, 615, Peachtree St. N.E., Suite 1100, Atlanta, Georgia, 30308.

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SAMPLE BASIC EMERGENCY CARE GUIDELINES

- 1) If the person responsible for students' welfare determines an injury or illness is serious, **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) PERSONNEL SHOULD BE CALLED IMMEDIATELY!** It is suggested that two people (*preferably adults*) be sent to call EMS and that they bring the student's health and injury information card with them. Once EMS personnel have been contacted, one person should return with health and injury information card to the emergency scene, while the second person makes other necessary telephone calls regarding the emergency.
- 2) **RENDER BASIC FIRST AID TO THE INJURED OR ILL STUDENT.** Be aware of the possibility that mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or CPR may be necessary.
- 3) **HAVE THE NON-INJURED STUDENTS SUSPEND ALL ACTIVITY,** return all materials to the proper storage places, and **SIT** in an area which you can observe, but that is away from the injured or ill student.
- 4) **SEND AN ASSISTANT COACH, CUSTODIAN, OR TWO RELIABLE STUDENTS TO THE SCHOOL DRIVEWAY TO DIRECT EMS PERSONNEL TO THE PROPER AREA.** Inform the person to return to the scene of the injury or illness immediately after EMS personnel have arrived. This will eliminate the person being confronted by passers-by and the media.
- 5) **ALLOW EMS PERSONNEL TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION WHEN THEY ARRIVE.**
- 6) **HAVE WHOEVER IS DESIGNATED IN THE CRITICAL INCIDENT / EMERGENCY PLAN TRAVEL WITH THE INJURED OR ILL STUDENT TO THE HOSPITAL OR CLINIC.**

SAMPLE EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Medical Services #000-0000 (911)

Police Department #000-000-0001

Fire Department #000-000-0002

Hospital #000-000-0003

Superintendent #000-000-0004

Principal #000-000-0005

Athletic Director #000-000-0006

As part of the planning process determine which phone numbers will be provided for each person and who will have access to which phone numbers.

SAMPLE EMERGENCY CALLING PROCEDURES

1. CALL THE EMS NUMBER AND BE PREPARED TO GIVE:

- a. your name,
- b. your location and address,
- c. the telephone number from which you are calling,
- d. the nature of the basic injury, illness, or critical incident, and,
- e. what is presently being done for any injured or ill student(s).

2. THE CALLER SHOULD ALWAYS HANG UP LAST.

3. CALL A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AND EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO THEM. Use this phone call to determine who will call the parents of the involved student(s).

4. HAVE THE DESIGNATED PERSON CALL THE PARENTS OF THE INVOLVED STUDENT(S) AND EXPLAIN THE SITUATION AS THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. If the parents cannot be notified, call the person or persons indicated on the student health and injury information card.

SAMPLE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

The supplies listed below may be needed in an emergency. Most coaches should have the knowledge and training to use them properly. Items such as stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs are not listed because the average coach does not have the training to properly use such equipment. Some common training kit supplies appear in this list because they may be necessary in an emergency.

- Air splints or other splinting materials
- Arm slings or triangular bandages
- Athletic tape (several rolls)
- Back board (especially in the swimming pool area)
- Bio hazard "red" bags
- Wire/bolt cutters (especially during football season)
- CPR mask
- Elastic wraps (4" and 6")
- Emergency calling procedures sheet (Sample included with this Update)
- Emergency care guidelines sheet (Sample included with this Update)
- Health & Injury Information cards (Sample included with this Update)
- Injured Athlete/Person Flow Chart
- Instant cold packs (unless ice is **ALWAYS** readily available)
- Sterile gauze pads
- Student information cards
- Supplies for handling blood and other body fluids containing blood
- Tape scissors

Activity advisors will probably need fewer emergency supplies than an athletic coach, but they should still have a few basic items such as band-aids, ice packs, etc. The critical incident / emergency plan should either stipulate, or give recommendations, as to what supplies should be available for various activities and athletic events.