



LIFESAVING SOCIETY CANADA NATIONAL POLICY

SUBJECT: Concussion Policy	
CATEGORY: Lifesaving Sport	POLICY NUMBER:
BYLAW: 5.4 and 5.5	DATE OF BOD APPROVAL: 26-01-2026

PURPOSE

This policy aims to safeguard the health and well-being of all sport participants—athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers—attending nationally sanctioned Lifesaving Society Canada (hereinafter LSC) sporting events. Through this policy, LSC demonstrates its commitment to participant safety by ensuring that an athlete with a suspected concussion receives timely and appropriate care and proper management to allow them to return to activity safely.

SCOPE

This policy encompasses the Board of Directors, Management Team, National Secretariat, Commissions all sport participants and/or agents of LSC.

DEFINITIONS

Concussion: A traumatic brain injury, induced by biomechanical forces to the head, or anywhere on the body which transmits an impulsive force to the head. Neurological impairment and the symptoms may evolve over the hours or days following the injury.

Nationally Sanctioned Sporting Event: Includes Canadian Lifeguard Emergency Response Championships (CLERC), Canadian Pool Lifesaving Championships (CPLC), Canadian Surf Lifesaving Championships (CSLC) and any other nationally sanctioned events such as National Team selection time trials or training camps.

PTSO: Provincial/Territorial Sport Organization

Sport Participants: Includes all athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. General

- 1.1. The health and safety of participants is of upmost importance to LSC. The Society recognizes that concussions are potentially serious injuries that should be treated in a way that demonstrates the health and safety of participants is always a priority.

2. Elimination or Minimization of Risk

- 2.1. To reduce or eliminate the risk of concussion-related harm to participants, the following measures shall be implemented:
 - a. All nationally sanctioned sporting events must adhere to the host Branch's applicable Provincial/Territorial legislation and/or relevant PTSO guidelines.
 - b. In the absence of such legislation or PTSO guidelines, host Branches shall comply with the National Concussion Policy and may refer to the Concussion Management Guidelines outlined in Appendix A to support the development of a branch-specific concussion management protocol.

- c. Concussion education and resources shall be made accessible to all sport participants, including athletes, coaches, officials, and caregivers; to promote awareness, prevention, and informed response.

3. Violations

- 3.1. Anyone found to have willfully ignored this policy and/or are in violation of the Code of Conduct will be suspended from their duties and participation at nationally sanctioned sporting events and will undergo a review and sanctions applied as appropriate.

EVALUATION

The Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors will evaluate this policy as per the policy revision cycle.

REFERENCE

- Lifesaving Society Canada Bylaw 5.4 (I) Role of Canadian Society
- Lifesaving Society Canada Bylaw 5.5 (d) Role of Branches
- Lifesaving Society Canada Code of Conduct
- Parachute (2017). *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*. Retrieved from: <https://parachute.ca/en/professional-resource/concussion-collection/canadian-guideline-on-concussion-in-sport/>
- Sport Information Resource Centre (2019). *Concussion Policy Development in Canadian Sport*. Retrieved from: <https://sirc.ca/concussion/best-practices-inspiration/canadas-concussion-roadmap/>
- Province of Ontario: Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (2021). *Rowan's Law: Information for sports organizations and schools*. Information for sport organizations. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-information-sports-organizations-and-schools#section-1>
- Province of Ontario: Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (2021). *Rowan's Law: Concussion Awareness Resources*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-awareness-resources>
- Swimming Canada (2021). *Concussion Policy-V6*. Retrieved from: <https://www.swimming.ca/en/resources/board-governance/board-policies/>
- Coaching Association of Canada (2025). *NCCP Making Head Way in Sport*. Retrieved from: <https://coach.ca/module/nccp-making-head-way-sport>

RELATED POLICIES

All Board Approved Policies

APPROVAL HISTORY

ISSUED BY:	APPROVED BY:	BOARD APPROVAL
Policy Committee	Policy Committee	Date: 26-09-2022
REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:	BOARD APPROVAL
		Date: 26-01-2026

Appendix A

Concussion Management Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Concussion Management Guidelines (hereinafter Guidelines) is to provide guidance to Lifesaving Society Canada's Branches in the development of a concussion management protocol where Provincial/Territorial legislation and/or relevant PTSO guidelines are absent or insufficient.

PRINCIPLES

1. The concussion management protocol should reflect best practices in concussion recognition, response, and education.
2. The goal is to ensure that any sport participant with a suspected of having sustained a concussion receives timely and appropriate care that enables a safe return to activity.
3. The health and safety of the individual must take precedence over all other considerations, including event outcomes or competitive advantage.
4. All sport participants should be educated on the signs and symptoms of concussion and understand the importance of proper response and recovery.

PROCEDURE

1. The host Branch is responsible for providing information on identification of suspected concussions and treatment protocols for distribution to coaches, officials, athletes and parents of athletes under the age of 18 years. The information can come from the host Branches' Provincial/Territorial legislation, relevant PTSO guidelines or Branch-developed concussion management guidelines as appropriate. Examples include:
 - 1.1. Athlete Education
 - Concussion awareness resources could be included in athlete registration packages (e.g. the *Concussion Education Sheet for Athletes* in Appendix B) or other communications as a proactive means of informing/educating sport participants.
 - 1.2. Coach Education
 - Branch certified coaches can receive concussion education and awareness training, including updated procedures as legislation or best practices evolve, through the recertification process.
 - The Coaching Association of Canada provides a free online module - [NCCP Making Head Way in Sport](#) - designed to help coaches gain the knowledge and skills required to ensure the safety of their athletes.
 - Concussion awareness resources such as the *Concussion Recognition Tool* (Appendix C) or similar could be included in club registration packages.
 - The Safety Officer could conduct a safety and concussion protocol briefing (to include the *Concussion Recognition Tool* or similar) as part of the coaches meeting prior to the start of the event.
 - The training should include:
 - Information on recognition of a suspected concussion and treatment protocols (a copy of the Safety Plan should be made available to all sport participants).
 - If a coach suspects that an athlete has a concussion, they should immediately remove them from training, practice or competition and refer them to the Safety Officer or designated first aid/rescue response staff for assessment.

- If an athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion, the coach or club should keep a record of the sport participant's progression through the graduated return-to-sport steps until cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner. If an athlete changes clubs or coaches, they or their parent are responsible for notification.

1.3. Officials and Volunteer Education

- Branch certified officials can receive concussion education and awareness training, including updated procedures as legislation or best practices evolve, through the recertification process.
 - Concussion awareness resources such as the *Concussion Recognition Tool* (Appendix C) or similar could be included in officials' and applicable volunteer registration packages.
 - The Safety Officer could conduct a safety and concussion protocol briefing (to include the *Concussion Recognition Tool* or similar) as part of the officials and applicable volunteer meetings prior to the start of the event.
 - The training should include:
 - Information on recognition of a suspected concussion and treatment protocols (a copy of the Safety Plan should be made available to all sport participants).
 - If an official or applicable volunteer suspects that an athlete has a concussion, they should immediately remove them from training, practice or competition and refer them to the Safety Officer or designated first aid/rescue response staff for assessment.
2. The Safety Officer or designated first aid/rescue response staff (e.g. lifeguards at aquatic venues) are responsible for implementing and managing concussion protocols during sanctioned events to include:
- 2.1 Ensuring that a concussion response plan referencing the *Concussion Recognition Tool* (Appendix C) or similar is included in the event Safety Plan. The response plan must include how to identify suspected concussions, treatment protocols and participant removal from training, practice or competition until cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner.
 - 2.2 Educating the designated first aid, rescue response staff and/or volunteers at the event who are not already trained or covered under a facility-specific concussion protocol.
 - 2.3 Immediately removing any participant from training, practice or competition if they have sustained a concussion or if a concussion is suspected, regardless of whether the concussion was from a sport activity associated with LSC. If the participant is under 18 years of age, their parent or guardian must be notified of the removal and reason.
 - 2.4 Calling the ambulance if any "red flag" signs and/or symptoms appear:
 - Neck pain or tenderness
 - Double vision
 - Weakness or tingling in arms or legs
 - Severe or increasing headache
 - Seizure or convulsion
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Vomiting more than once
 - Increasingly restless, agitated or aggressive
 - Getting more and more confused

2.5 Make and keep a record of incidences where a participant has been removed from training, practice or competition due to a suspected concussion. This may include a facility incident/accident report.

- NOTE: LSC is not able to monitor medical clearance following an event. It is the responsibility of the participant, coach, and parent/guardian (if applicable) to ensure that a physician or nurse practitioner conducts a medical assessment. Clearance must be obtained before the individual returns to training, practice, or competition.

Appendix B

Sample Concussion Education Sheet for Athletes

See Attachment

Appendix C

Sample Concussion Recognition Tool

See Attachment