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Denton Parks and Rec

CITY OF DENTON PARKS AND RECREATION

Department Policy Title:	Parks and Recreation Concussion Policy
Policy Type:	Administrative Procedure
Implementation Date:	01/11/2023
Last Revision Date:	01/23/2023

POLICY STATEMENT

Denton Parks and Recreation is committed to the health and well-being of all employees and participants in sport and recreation programming. This policy will provide awareness and training on how to properly assess and manage a concussion incident as well as how to help minimize these incidents from occurring.

All Denton Parks and Recreation Department employees, directly involved in sport and recreation programming, will be made aware of common symptoms and signs of a concussion and trained to properly manage a potential concussion incident.

PURPOSE

As promoters of health, wellness, and physical fitness, and as the gatekeepers of the public space accessed for that purpose, there is an inherent responsibility for park and recreation agencies to provide information and resources to the public to deal with the issue of concussion prevention, assessment and treatment.

The Denton Parks and Recreation Department has developed a concussion policy to provide concussion awareness to all individuals and organizations involved in City of Denton recreation programming and the use of City of Denton recreational facilities. The Denton Parks and Recreation Department will inform individual participants and community organizations that a concussion policy has been implemented and that resources will be available for their information. Organizations that have developed and implemented their own concussion policies and procedures and/or are following policies or procedures established by their sport governing bodies are encouraged to review this policy and direct any questions or concerns to Parks and Recreation Department staff.

The City of Denton, all participants, coaches, parks and recreation staff, trainers, safety personnel, fitness trainers, parents, etc. have a role to play to ensure the safety of those participating in physical activity. This includes encouraging and motivating participants to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. Denton Parks and Recreation will

ensure that concussion resource information is available to all residents and visitors at Denton recreational facilities.

ACTION STEPS

There is a myriad of available information and policies and procedures regarding concussions in sport and recreation. While the information can be sport specific, most concussion in sports laws, regulations, guidelines and policies and procedures generally involve three action steps:

1. **Educate staff, instructors, supervisors, coaches, parents and athletes.**
2. **Remove the athlete/ participant from play.**
3. **Obtain permission to return to play.**

ACTION STEP # 1 - Educate staff, instructors, supervisors, coaches, parents and athletes

Definition of a Concussion:

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, that is often described as a "mild" brain injury because concussions are not usually life-threatening. Their effects, however, can be serious, especially if the brain is not given adequate time to heal before returning to sports or activities. Preventing concussion, recognizing symptoms, seeking medical evaluation and following concussion guidelines are all vital for full recovery and the prevention of more serious effects.

Concussions are caused by a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth, causing impact on the brain. Athletes/ participants experiencing any of the signs and symptoms below after a blow to the head or body should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional skilled in evaluating concussion says they are symptom-free and able to return to play.

Signs and symptoms may include:

Observed by Staff, Coach, Parent, others	Symptoms Reported by Athlete or Participant
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or pressure in head
Confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light or noise
Answers questions slowly	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy

Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Concentration or memory problems
Exhibits mood, behavior or personality changes	Confusion
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Just does not "feel right"

Rest is essential after a concussion to allow the brain adequate time to heal. If a repeat concussion occurs before the brain has recovered, there is an increased risk for a more serious brain injury with long-term effects. Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and can take longer to recover than adults. Recognizing and responding properly to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death. It is essential that staff, instructors, supervisors, coaches, parents and athletes are all educated on the importance of following strict concussion guidelines.

ACTION STEP # 2 - Remove the athlete/participant from play

Critical Step:

All participants should consult a physician when a concussion is suspected. Coaches, municipal staff, trainers and safety personnel, players or participants and parents should not attempt to treat a concussion without a physician's involvement.

Response to Loss of Consciousness by Player/ Participant:

- If there is a loss of consciousness – initiate Emergency Response Plan/First Aid Protocol and call 911 for ambulance response. Assume possible neck injury – do not move the participant. Continue to monitor ABCs - airway, breathing and circulation.
- Do not leave participant alone.
- Do not move the participant or remove any athletic equipment. Wait for 911 Medical Response to arrive.
- Follow Standard First Aid practices in response to an unconscious person.
- Contact parent/guardian of the participant. If not onsite call parent/guardian emergency telephone number provided during registration.
- Advise Facility Operator of incident to ensure easy access to participant by 911 Medical Responders.
- Complete an incident report (Parks and Rec staff see Policy... Incident/accident reporting) including all details of what, when, where, how, who. Include summary of actions taken in response to the incident.
- Physician's approval is required for participant to return to physical activity.

Response to a Conscious Player/Participant:

- Remove the participant from the current game/practice/programming.

- Do not leave the participant alone; monitor symptoms and signs following Standard First Aid Practices.
- Do not administer medication.
- Inform the Coach/Recreation Staff, parent/guardian about the injury.
- The participant must not return to play in that game/practice/activity.
- The participant should be evaluated by a medical physician as soon as possible.
- Complete an incident report (Parks and Rec staff see Policy... Incident/accident reporting) including all details of what, when, where, how, who. Include summary of actions taken in response to the incident.
- Physician’s approval is required for participant to return to physical activity.

ACTION STEP # 3 – Obtain Permission to Return to Play

- The return to play process is gradual and begins **after a physician has given the participant clearance to return to activity**. If any symptoms/signs return during this process, the participant must be re-evaluated by a physician. If any symptoms or signs persist there is no return to play. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily when active!
- A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.
- The CDC provides the following 6-Step Return to Play Progression Guideline (https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/return_to_sports.html)

CDC 6-Step Return to Play Progression

Step 1	No activity, only complete rest. Proceed to step 2 only when all symptoms and are gone. This includes avoiding both mental and physical stress.
Step 2	Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weightlifting.
Step 3	Sport/activity specific activities and training (e.g., skating/running).
Step 4	Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with severity of the concussion and the participant. Go to step 5 only after medical clearance has been granted (reassessment and medical note clearing participant for contact play).
Step 5	Begin drills with body contact.

Step 6	Game play.
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***This is only a guideline. The player should always follow the guidance of their health care provider.**

PREVENTION

To lower your risk for head injuries and concussion - use your mind to protect your body! Make safe choices to prevent concussion and traumatic brain injury by:

- Practicing safe techniques and actions on and off the field/ play area
- Limit contact during sports practices (when appropriate for the sport)
- Condition well to prepare for athletic activities
- Follow the rules of the game and coach recommendations
- Practice good sportsmanship, respect other participants and don't use unnecessary force
- Always use the recommended protective gear, such as properly fitted helmets, pads, and eye and mouth guards
- Check sports equipment often. Check for wear and tear/ condition, proper fitment, proper storage, and repair. Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Protecting from traumatic brain injury and concussion goes beyond sports and recreation; when it comes to vehicle safety, preventing falls and avoiding violence - all leading causes of brain injury
- Inform and educate participants about the risks of concussion.
- **When in doubt, sit them out!**

RESPONSIBILITY

The following responsibility protocol will be implemented to ensure the concussion policy is maintained and updated as required.

- The City of Denton will support the Concussion Policy and its implementation.
- The Director of Parks and Recreation will support the Concussion Policy and its implementation.
- The Parks and Recreation Department along with EMS, Risk, and Safety Team will review and update this policy annually.
- The Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation will circulate this policy, changes and updates to Parks and Recreation Department staff.
- The Athletics Supervisor will provide this policy annually to sport organizations that utilize Denton Parks and Recreation fields and facilities.
- Employees shall recognize and be accountable for their responsibilities in the exercise of their duties.
- In the event that an employee(s) becomes aware of a suspected concussion, an incident report will be completed by the employee(s) and submitted to their supervisor.

COMMUNITCATION

Denton Parks and Recreation will communicate this policy in the following ways:

- Inclusion in staff onboarding and in-service trainings.
- Policy will be available at all Denton recreation facilities.
- Inclusion in all Facility Rental Agreements.
- Made available on the Denton Parks and Recreation website.
- Inclusion in the terms and conditions for facility rental and program registrations.
- Distribution to all sport and recreation community groups who facilitate programming in City of Denton facilities.

RESOURCES

1. Get a Heads Up on Concussion in Sports Policies, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup>.
2. National Injury Prevention Foundation. Parachute - ThinkFirst Program. Concussion Recognition, Management and Prevention, <https://www.thinkfirst.org>.
3. Concussion Legacy Foundation, Fighting Concussions & CTE and improving the lives of those impacted, <https://concussionfoundation.org/>.
4. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/return_to_sports.html

Revision Date	Policy Owner	Summary
01/11/2023	Megan Thomas, Program Area Manager	Formalized policy creation