



PROCEDURE TITLE: Program Participant Concussion Protocol		
Procedure Number: 06-001	Review Cycle: Annual	Effective Date: 1/1/2025
Reviewer: Deputy Director		Approval Authority: Director

SCOPE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a comprehensive approach to the prevention, recognition, assessment, management, and return to participation for concussions sustained by participants engaged in organized recreation activities. This policy applies to all participants, volunteers, parents, coaches and other individuals involved in organized recreation activities. The Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks offers a wide variety of programs, services, and activities for the public and seeks to provide a safe experience for program participants who may take part in activities organized by Recreation and Parks, program partners, or affiliated service providers. This document establishes a policy to educate staff, volunteers, parents, volunteers, coaches, officials, and participants about the signs, symptoms, and risks associated with suffering a blow or bump to the head, or hit to the body, that may or may not lead to a concussion or concussion-like symptoms. Further, this policy establishes an action plan, which identifies the process by which anyone suspected of suffering a head-injury, blow to the body, or concussion-like symptoms will be treated.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks will educate staff, volunteers, parents, coaches, officials, and participants about the signs, symptoms, and risks associated with concussions while also providing actions steps and an infographic that will be beneficial when providing education about concussion-like symptoms while guiding the steps that should be taken when a concussion is suspected.

Definition: As defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control (CDC), a concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells.

Recognition: There are many signs and symptoms that should be considered when evaluating a participant for a possible concussion. In accordance with this policy, any program participant who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion must be removed from the program, event, activity, game, or practice immediately and shall not return to participation until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

- Signs and Symptoms Observed by Staff, Volunteers, Parents, Coaches or Officials: (Red Flags)
 - Appears dazed or stunned
 - Confused about assignment or position
 - Forgets an instruction
 - Moves clumsily
 - Answers questions slowly
 - Loses consciousness (even briefly)
 - Exhibits mood, behavior, or personality changes
 - Trouble remembering events prior to hit or fall
 - Slowed reaction time
- Seizures Symptoms Reported by Participant:
 - Headache
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Dizziness
 - Double or blurry vision
 - Sensitivity to light or noise
 - Feeling sluggish
 - Concentration problems
 - Memory loss
 - Confusion
 - Does not “feel right”
 - Trouble sleeping

Role of Staff, Volunteers, Parents, Coaches or Officials: Staff, volunteers, parents, coaches, or officials will not be expected to diagnose a concussion. However, they will be asked to use their best judgement when observing the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions. If a participant exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion during a recreation program, event, activity, game, or practice, the participant must be removed from activity and the following action plan implemented:

Course Of Action: In accordance with best practices identified by the CDC, BCPD’s Action Plan will consist of the following steps:

Step 1: Educate Staff, Volunteers, Parents, Coaches, or Officials Inform and educate staff, volunteers, parents, coaches, and officials about the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions.

Educate staff, volunteers, parents, coaches, and officials about the types of incidents that might lead to the onset of a concussion or concussion-like symptoms (a bump, blow or jolt to the head, or by a hit to the body, that causes the brain to move rapidly back and forth). Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks will initiate concussion program education and training as follows:

- On an annual basis, Recreation and Parks will review the Program Participant Concussion Policy in accordance with best practices as published by the CDC
- The review process will take place by July 1
- Programs operated by Recreation and Parks and associated staff training programs will be developed in accordance with this Program Participant Concussion Policy
- Provide access to concussion information sheets for all staff, volunteers, parents, coaches, and officials
- Post the policy on the BCRP website
- Compliance with this policy will be added as a requirement to all program agreements, partner agreements, or other contract service agreements administered by BCRP, as appropriate
- For partner organizations or contract service providers that are sanctioned by, or affiliated with, governing bodies or other organizations) BCRP will provide the organization with the following options:
 - Use the BCRP Program Participant Concussion Policy
 - Use the policy of the organization's governing body if it meets or exceeds BCRP policy
 - Note: Whether using the BCRP Program Participant Concussion Policy or the policy of their governing body, partner organizations and contract service providers will be responsible for implementing and overseeing their organization's concussion management program in its entirety

Step 2: Monitor, Assess and Determine Appropriate Course of Action

Program staff are assigned to supervise many BCRP activities. While staff cannot see everything that occurs during such activities, which might include sports practices, games, camp activities, and other types of active recreation programs, staff should monitor programs and program participants for incidents that might lead to the onset of a concussion or concussion-like symptoms.

If a participant is removed from activity by a parent, volunteer, coach, official, or staff member due to incidents that might lead to the onset of a concussion or concussion-like symptoms (a bump, blow or jolt to the head, or by a hit to the body, that causes the brain to move rapidly back and forth), staff should assess the situation to determine if any of the signs and symptoms of a concussion were observed, or reported by the participant, at or after the time the participant was removed from play.

If the participant displays signs or symptoms associated with the Recognition section of this policy, or if the participant reports any of the referenced symptoms, the participant should be removed from participation immediately, and the staff member should implement the *Remove From Participation* process.

- Remove From Participation
 - If a staff member, volunteer, parent, coach, or official observes a program participant who demonstrates any of the signs, symptoms, or behaviors associated with a concussion or concussion-like symptoms, the following steps must be taken:
 - Tell a staff member, coach, volunteer, parent, or official if you suspect that a participant has a concussion or displays concussion-like symptoms
 - Remove participant from activity, event, practice, game, or competition right away
 - If a head injury appears to be severe, call 911
 - Report the concussion symptoms observed to BCRP staff
 - Notify parent or guardian
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- It is then the responsibility of the parent/guardian to seek further medical evaluation for the participant
 - Complete an incident report
 - Any participant removed from an activity due to a blow to the head or to displaying the signs, symptoms, or behaviors associated with a concussion, WILL NOT be permitted to resume participation until the following step has been completed:
- Return to Participation
 - Any participant removed from activity in accordance with the Program Participant Concussion Policy must be evaluated by a physician and medically cleared before returning to participation.
 - When a participant is removed from an activity, the participant, or parent/guardian if under 18 years of age, should seek medical attention
 - Prior to a return to program participation the participant must be medically cleared by a physician
 - Participant must provide a signed document by a physician stating they are cleared to return to full program participation and this document must include the date when a return to active participation is allowed (NOTE: Emergency Room and Urgent Care physicians typically do not make clearance decisions at the time of the first visit.

REFERENCES:

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/policy/HeadsUpOnConcussionInSportsPolicies-a.pdf>

REVISIONS:

Include dates of revision.