

School District Concussion Policy Evaluation

Summary Of Findings

Oklahoma's Concussion Law

Passed in 2010 and updated in 2016, Oklahoma's concussion law (70 O.S. § 24-155) requires governing boards of public school districts and youth sports organizations to develop policies on concussion education, prevention, and management.

Required policy tenets include:

- Annual dissemination of concussion fact sheets to youth athletes and parents/guardians
- Annual completion of fact sheet acknowledgment forms by athletes and guardians
- Annual concussion training by game and team officials
- Removal of an athlete from play upon a suspected concussion
- No same day return to play after a suspected concussion
- Written clearance to return to play after evaluation from a licensed health care provider
- Setting penalties for game and team officials for failure to remove an athlete from play as directed

Purpose

In 2019, the Injury Prevention Service (IPS) conducted an evaluation of concussion policies from school districts in Oklahoma. The purpose of this study was to identify:

- Gaps between Oklahoma's concussion law (70 O.S. § 24-155) and its application across school districts;
- Barriers to policy implementation; and
- Opportunities to improve available resources for concussion policy development, prevention, and education.

Results

Contacted: 543 districts

Responded: 319 districts

Response rate: 59%

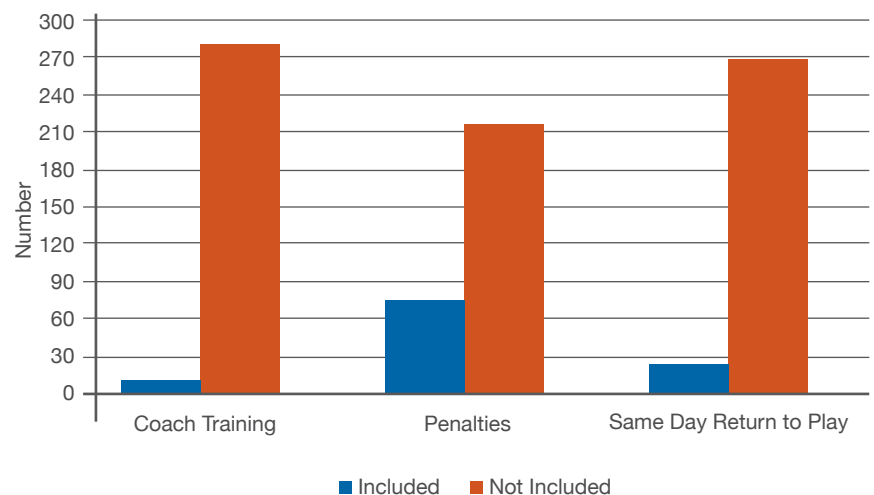
Policies received: 293

Districts with no policy: 26

Policies meeting all requirements of state law: 1

The most commonly missing policy components required by Oklahoma law were: annual coach training, penalties for not removing a youth athlete from play upon a suspected concussion, and specifically prohibiting same day return to play without written clearance as detailed in the 2016 law.

Figure 1. Missing Policy Components



Concussion Facts

A concussion is a type of **traumatic brain injury (TBI)** caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth.

Every year, **283,000** children in the US are treated in an emergency department for a sports- or recreation-related concussion. Among these injuries, **45%** are sustained in contact sports.¹

The brain continues to develop until the mid-twenties. Injuries to the brain while it is still forming can impair physical, cognitive, and psychological functioning into adulthood.

¹Emergency Department Visits for Sports- and Recreation-related Traumatic Brain Injuries Among Children – United States, 2010–2016

Table 1. Submissions Categorized by Type

| Type | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| District policy approved by board of education | 191 | 65% |
| Concussion fact sheet and/or acknowledgment form | 68 | 23% |
| Concussion management plan | 22 | 8% |
| List of requirements for a concussion policy | 12 | 4% |

N = 293 documents

Materials developed from this project

As a result of this policy evaluation, the IPS developed:

- A concussion policy guide for school districts and youth sports organizations;
- Updated guidance for return to play and return to learn protocols after concussion;
- New concussion fact sheets and acknowledgment forms for schools and youth sports organizations to provide to parents and youth, as required by state statute; and
- Updated IPS concussion website content to provide easy access to new materials.

For questions, technical assistance, or printed materials, contact the IPS.

405.426.8440 | concussion@health.ok.gov | oklahoma.gov/health/concussion

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