



Solution Title:	Concussion Policy	
Last Updated:	May 16, 2016	\$701 - 03

HOW MIGHT WE:

How Might the Town of Pelham protect participants (particularly children and youth) involved in sports and recreation programs and users of facilities from concussions and ensure that all participants and/or parents/guardians understand the seriousness and long term effects of concussions.

KEY FACTS:

- The Town of Pelham wishes to take a proactive approach to reduce and/or eliminate the risk of exposure to concussions to program participants and facility users.
- The Town of Pelham wishes to create standards and guidelines in order to mitigate the risks associated with concussions.
- A concussion is a common injury among children and adolescents participating in sports and recreational activities.
- The young brain – especially the adolescent brain – is most susceptible to concussion and takes longer to recover than an adult brain.
- Without identification and proper management, a concussion can result in permanent brain damage and on rare occasions, even death.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) has introduced a requirement that municipalities have a concussion awareness and management policy in place in order to be eligible to apply for future funding opportunities and that the policy aligns with the Ontario Concussion Strategy and have concussion protocols which are consistent to those required by Ontario School Boards.
- The Town of Pelham currently has no concussion awareness and management policy in place.

The Town of Pelham understands the seriousness of concussions and is committed to keeping participants safe by reducing the incidence of concussions, and ensuring the proper management of participants with suspected and diagnosed concussions following appropriate return to play guidelines.

The Town of Pelham will:

- Ensure that all participants and/or parents/guardians are aware of this policy.
- Facility Rentals will be supplied a copy of the Town of Pelham concussion policy and be required to sign off that they have received and reviewed the policy.
- Provide information to program participants and/or parents/guardians that addresses concussion prevention, identification and management.



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- Provide training on the prevention, identification and management of suspected and diagnosed concussions to all employees/contractors that are directly involved with recreation programming and/or the supervision of participants.
- Encourage all participants to wear a helmet when utilizing town recreational facilities. Helmets are mandatory for all hockey related programs.

All Town of Pelham employees/contractors that are directly involved with recreation programming and/or the supervision of participants will:

- Follow appropriate procedures related to removal from play in cases where a concussion is suspected.
- Document all suspected concussions sustained while participating in a Town of Pelham program using an incident report. Ensure that participants follow the six step return to play protocol in cases where a concussion has been diagnosed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Any return to play considerations must be accompanied by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner's written approval.

Participants and/or parents/guardians will:

- Notify an employee/contractor of the Town of Pelham about any current or previous concussions or concerns, and ensure ongoing communication throughout the return to play process.

This concussion policy is intended to align with the Ontario Concussion Strategy. As part of the Strategy, an approach was developed by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) to ensure that sport organizations and community sport and recreation providers have concussion protocols which are consistent to those required by Ontario School Boards. The Town of Pelham staff will work closely with program participants, instructors, local minor sport organizations and additional recreation providers to ensure proper awareness.

This policy is intended to educate users/participants on concussion awareness.

A concussion is a common injury among children and adolescents participating in sports and recreational activities. A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that can have serious effects on a young, developing brain. While most children and teens with concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have concussion symptoms that last for days, weeks, months or even years.



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A concussion:

- Is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms/signs that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- May be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- Can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact, most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness);
- Cannot normally be seen on X-rays, computed tomography (CT) scans, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans; and
- Is a clinical diagnosis made by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner

Participants, who have had a concussion at any time of their lives, have a greater chance of getting another concussion. Recognizing and responding properly to concussion when they first occur can help prevent further injury.

The young brain - especially the adolescent brain - is most susceptible to concussion and takes longer to recover (than adults). Without identification and proper management, a concussion can result in permanent brain damage, and in rare occasions, even death.

CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs and symptoms of suspected concussion (refer to [Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool](#)). Presence of any one or more of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Loss of consciousness | • Sensitivity to light |
| • Headache | • Sadness |
| • Seizure or convulsion | • Amnesia |
| • Dizziness | • Fatigue or low energy |
| • Balance problems | • Feeling like "in a fog" |
| • Confusion | • Nervous or anxious |
| • Nausea or vomiting | • Neck Pain |
| • Feeling slowed down | • "Don't feel right" |
| • Drowsiness | • Sensitivity to noise |
| • "Pressure in head" | • Difficulty remembering |
| • More emotional | • Difficulty concentrating |
| • Blurred vision | |
| • Irritability | |



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Signs and symptoms can be immediate or may be delayed by hour or days. Concussion symptoms are made worse by exertion – both physical and mental. It may be more difficult for children under 10 years of age to communicate how they are feeling.

This policy will be made available to all participants and user groups.

REMOVAL FROM PLAY [SUSPECTED CONCUSSION]

- a) If an individual is conscious and suspected of having a concussion, he/she is to be immediately removed from play/activity.
- b) Employees/contractors are to understand that they have the authority to remove from play any individual suspected of having a concussion – “when in doubt, sit them out.”
- c) Following their removal from play, any individual suspected of having a concussion is to be assessed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

Note: If an individual is unconscious/has experienced any loss of consciousness, initiate emergency action plan and call 911.

SIX STEP RETURN TO PLAY [DIAGNOSED CONCUSSION]

- Step 1:** No activity, only complete mental and physical rest. Proceed to step 2 only when all symptoms are gone.
- Step 2:** Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.
- Step 3:** Sport specific activities and training (e.g. skating).
- Step 4:** Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. Go to step 5 after written medical clearance.
- Step 5:** Begin drills with body contact.
- Step 6:** Game play. (The earliest a concussed athlete should return to play is one week).

SOLUTION STATEMENT:

The Town of Pelham will educate and promote concussion awareness for people participating in our programs and using our facilities.