



Developing an Emergency Action Plan

Preparation is the key to responding to unexpected emergencies. While people talk about emergency action plans, it is imperative to get it in writing. You may think you've got everything covered in your head, but the best way to cover all the bases is to put it in print.

Every Rugby club and facility should have an Emergency Action Plan. This is the only way to be ready for potential emergencies. Although emergencies can occur anywhere, certain types of emergencies, such as specific natural disasters, are more likely in some locations than others. Emergencies not only include injuries, but illnesses such as heart attack, seizure, or stroke.

An Emergency Action Plan should include all relevant categories and emergencies. This plan should outline the responsibility of everyone that may be involved, and should cover the following areas:

Layout of the facility

Plan where Emergency and Medical personnel will enter and exit the field. Have a designated place for all keys that open gates or doors to the playing service so that emergency services can come in or players may be evacuated. Decide on the location of rescue and first aid equipment and always have a working phone nearby with emergency telephone numbers posted.

Equipment

Make sure that your first aid kits are fully stocked and you have access to emergency equipment. Also, make sure to have physical forms and medical history forms for your players easily accessible.

Internal Support Personnel (at the ground)

Evaluate which support personnel will be with you at the practice or game. This could include coaches, athletic trainers, athletic officials, facility administrators, management personnel, teachers, school nurse/physician, athletic director, clerical personnel and maintenance personnel.

External Support Personnel (away from the ground)

Provide posted telephone numbers for Emergency and Medical personnel, police, fire, hazardous materials team, Poison Control Centre, hospitals, power and gas companies and health department. Assign each staff member a duty. Examples of duties include:

- a (trained) person to provide care,
- a person to control bystanders and supervise other athletes,
- a person to meet Emergency and Medical personnel,
- a person to transport the injured athlete when appropriate.

Communication

Make sure it is clear how and when to call the local emergency number. Create a chain of command within your ground/ facility support personnel. Make sure there is a person to contact the injured player's family or guardian, and a person to deal with the media.

Follow-up

Decide who will be responsible for completing the appropriate documentation (accident and incident report, etc.) and refilling your first aid kits. Put together a team to evaluate the effectiveness of the Emergency Action Plan and conduct a staff debriefing. It is vital to have strategies and procedures in place prior to a crisis. By developing an Emergency Action Plan, you will be prepared to handle emergency situations at your practices or games.