



## Best Practices for Sudden Cardiac Arrest Management

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- 1. Scope
  - a. Sudden cardiac arrest management applies to all school-sponsored athletic activities.
    - 1) Interscholastic high school teams
    - 2) High school summer league teams
    - 3) Interscholastic middle school teams
    - 4) All intramural teams
    - 5) Sport club teams
  - b. Exception: athletic activity during the regular school day or as part of a physical education course.
- 2. Definitions
  - a. “Athletic activity” includes all of the following:
    - 1) Interscholastic athletics;

- 2) An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by a school, including cheerleading and club-sponsored sports activities;
  - 3) Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by a school;
  - 4) Practices, interscholastic practices, and scrimmages for all of the activities listed under paragraphs 1) to 3), inclusive.
- b. “Authorized person” means an employee, volunteer, or contractor authorized to provide health or medical services to student athletes.
3. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information
- a. Thousands of sudden cardiac arrests occur among youth, as
    - 1) It is the #2 leading cause of death under 25.
    - 2) It is the #1 killer of student athletes during exercise.
  - b. Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly.
    - 1) When heart stops beating, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs.
  - c. SCA is NOT a heart attack
    - 1) A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart.
  - d. SCA is a malfunction in the heart’s electrical system, causing the victim to collapse.
    - 1) The malfunction is caused by a congenital or genetic defect in the heart’s structure.
4. Potential Indicators and Risk Factors
- a. Potential Indicators
    - 1) Fainting or seizure, especially during or right after exercise;
    - 2) Fainting repeatedly or with excitement or startle;
    - 3) Excessive shortness of breath during exercise;
    - 4) Racing or fluttering heart palpitations or irregular heartbeat;
    - 5) Repeated dizziness or lightheadedness;
    - 6) Chest pain or discomfort with exercise;
    - 7) Excessive, unexpected fatigue during or after exercise.
  - b. Risk factors
    - 1) Family history of known heart abnormalities or sudden death before age 50;
    - 2) Specific family history of the following:

- a) Long QT syndrome,
  - b) Brugada Syndrome,
  - c) Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy,
  - d) Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Dysplasia (ARVD).
- 3) Family members with unexplained fainting or seizures;
  - 4) Known structural heart abnormality, repaired or unrepaired;
  - 5) Use of drugs, such as:
    - a) Cocaine,
    - b) Inhalants,
    - c) “Recreational” drugs,
    - d) Excessive energy drinks,
    - e) Performance-enhancing supplements.

## 5. Education and Training

### a. Coaches

- 1) A coach of an athletic activity shall complete a sudden cardiac arrest training course and shall retake the training course every two years thereafter
  - a) Required training content:
    - Nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest,
    - Risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing the following:
      - Fainting or seizures,
      - Unexplained shortness of breath,
      - Chest pains,
      - Dizziness,
      - Racing heart rate,
      - Extreme fatigue.
- 2) A coach of an athletic activity is not eligible to coach an athletic activity until the coach completes the required training course, as scheduled.
- 3) Free on-line course:

a) <http://www.cifstate.org/sports-medicine/sca/index>

b. Parents and student athletes

- 1) A Sudden Cardiac Arrest information sheet is to be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian before the athlete's initiating practice or competition.
- 2) The information sheets or similar forms are to be sent home, signed, and collected annually
- 3) Forms can be found on these websites:  
<http://www.vcssfa.org/Forms.aspx>  
<http://www.cifstate.org/sports-medicine/sca/index>

6. Forms

a. Required Forms

- 1) A Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information Sheet (SFA 5310, SFA 5310S)
- 2) A Concussion Information Sheet (SFA 5210, SFA 5210S)
- 3) Voluntary Sports/Athletic Event or Activity Informed Consent and Liability Release, Acknowledgement and Assumption of Potential Risk
- 4) Field Trip Authorization and Medical Treatment Authorization (SFA 2010, SFA 2010S)
- 5) Report of Personal Accident
  - a) Required to be completed each time a sudden cardiac arrest is suspected
  - b) To be forwarded to the District Risk Management Department or Business Office
- 6) Written clearance of return to participation
  - a) A student athlete who is removed from play due to potential indicators listed in Section 4, of this Best Practices, is not permitted to return to participate in an athletic activity until the student athlete is evaluated and cleared to return to participate in writing by a physician and surgeon, or a nurse practitioner or physician assistant.
  - b) See Readmission to School of Student with Temporary Disability or Injury (SFA 5110, SFA 5110S)

b. Recommended Forms

- 1) Sudden Cardiac Arrest Checklists
  - a) Preseason (before the athlete's initiating practice or competition),

b) Injury Management

7. General Prevention

a. Annual Pre-Participation Physical Examination

1) Sports governed by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF):

- a) Schools will require that a student receive an annual physical examination conducted by a medical practitioner certifying that the student is physically fit to participate in athletics.
- b) The physical examination must be completed before a student may try out, practice or participate in interscholastic athletic competition.

2) Sports not governed by CIF:

- a) Student athletes are recommended to have an annual pre-participation exam performed by a physician and surgeon, or a nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

b. Encourage healthy eating

8. Removal from Activity

- a. A student athlete who passes out or faints while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, shall be removed from participation at that time by the athletic director, coach, athletic trainer, or authorized person.
- b. A student athlete who exhibits any of the other potential indicators of sudden cardiac arrest, as listed in Section 4, of this Best Practices, during an athletic activity, may be removed from participation by an athletic trainer or authorized person if the athletic trainer or authorized person reasonably believes that the symptoms are cardiac related.
  - 1) In the absence of an athletic trainer or authorized person, any coach who observes any of the symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest shall notify the parent or guardian of the student athlete so that the parent or guardian can determine what treatment, if any, the student athlete should seek

9. Return to Activity

- a. A student athlete who is removed from play due to potential indicators listed in Section 4, of this Best Practices, is not permitted to return to participate in an athletic activity until the student athlete is evaluated and cleared to return to participate in writing by a physician and surgeon, or a nurse practitioner or physician assistant.