

Concussion Protocol - California

On October 26, 2016, the Governor of California signed California Assembly Bill 2007 into law. The law, titled "Youth Sports Concussion Protocols", is effective January 1, 2017 and is found in the California Health Safety Code under the section referencing "Adolescent Health" (Cal Health and Safety Code §124235).

The new law applies to "youth sports organizations" which includes any organization, business, non-profit entity or local government agency that sponsors or conducts amateur sports competitions, training camps, or clubs in which persons seventeen (17) years of age or younger participate: youth sports organizations are required to immediately remove an athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury in an athletic activity for the remainder of the day. The athlete shall not be permitted to return to the athletic activity until being evaluated by, and receiving written clearance to return to athletic activity from, a licensed health care provider. An athlete who has sustained a concussion shall complete a graduated return to play protocol of not less than seven (7) days in duration under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. If an athlete seventeen (17) years of age or younger has been removed from athletic activity due to a suspected concussion, the youth sports organization shall notify a parent or a guardian of that athlete of the time and date of the injury, the symptoms observed and any treatment provided to that athlete for the injury. On an annual basis, a youth sports organization shall provide a concussion and head injury information sheet to each athlete. The information sheet shall be signed and returned by the athlete and, if the athlete is seventeen (17) years of age or younger, shall also be signed by the athlete's parent or guardian before the athlete initiates practice or competition. The information sheet may be sent and returned through an electronic medium including, but not limited to, facsimile or electronic mail. On a yearly basis, the youth sports organization shall offer concussion and head injury education, or related educational materials or both, to each coach and administrator of the youth sports organization. Each coach and administrator shall be required to successfully complete the concussion and head injury education offered at least once, either online or in person, before supervising an athlete in an activity of the youth sports organization.

An additional California concussion law is found under the California Education Code (Cal. Educ. Code Section 35179.1 (c)(6), known as the 1998 California High School Coaching Education and Training Program) and requires coaches be certified in CPR and first aid and have a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of concussions and the appropriate response to concussions. The California law is found at sections 38131(6) and 49475 of the Education Code. (Cal. Educ. Code §35179.1(c)(6), § 38131(6)), and §49475.

Section 49475 provides that if a school district, charter school or private school offers an athletic program, any athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion must be removed immediately from the activity for the rest of the day. The athlete is not permitted to return to activity until evaluated and cleared in writing by a licensed health care professional who is trained in the management of concussions and acting within the scope of their practice. Parents/guardians of any student wishing to participate in an athletic activity and the athlete are required to annually sign a concussion information sheet before the student can participate. If a licensed health care provider determines that an athlete has sustained a concussion, the athlete shall complete a graduated return to play protocol of not less than seven (7) days under the care of a licensed health care provider. Section 35178.1(c)(6) requires a high school coach to obtain training and certification in first aid and CPR, which includes a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of concussions and the appropriate response to concussions. Section 38131 provides that youth sports league activities taking place on school facilities or on school grounds are at the discretion of the governing board for the school district and subject to terms and conditions as the board may deem proper.

The official versions of sections 124235, 38131(6), 35179.1, and 49475 are currently available online at:
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=124235.&lawCode=HSC
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC§ionNum=38131
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC§ionNum=35179.1
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC§ionNum=49475.

The following website offer additional information regarding California concussion law:

<http://www.cifstate.org/sports-medicine/concussions/index>