

Concussion Prevention and Management Policy

Policy Statement

The Town of St. Marys recognizes concussions are serious injuries which require appropriate follow-up measures to reduce risk of potential additional injury.

Scope

This policy encompasses all full and part-time positions within the Corporation of the Town of St. Marys.

Purpose

This policy sets out to provide awareness of the potential seriousness of concussions, and to familiarize staff with the signs and symptoms of concussions along with general guidelines for how to handle a suspected concussion.

Definition

Concussion

Is a clinical diagnosis that be made by a medical doctor. It may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck, it can also be caused by a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. Concussions can cause changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g. headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g. difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioral (e.g. depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g. drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep). Concussions cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans or MRIs.

Concussions can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness).

A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can increase the chance for long term effects and can lead to Second Impact Syndrome – a rare condition that causes pain and severe brain swelling and often catastrophic results.

Signs and Symptoms

Individuals may experience a wide variety of signs and symptoms. Sometimes they are experienced immediately; however, they may appear several days after the incident.

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

Seek immediate medical attention if any of the following signs or symptoms are present:

- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Convulsions or seizures
- One pupil larger than the other
- Slurred speech
- Headache that gets worse and doesn’t go away
- Unusual behaviour
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Loss of consciousness (even brief)
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation

Responsibilities

The Town of St. Marys will create a concussion awareness strategy by doing the following:

- Conduct ongoing awareness training and provide education to members of the public using Town recreation services, which may include flyers and information brochures;
- Provide training to Town staff on signs and symptoms of concussions, advising potential concussion sufferers to seek medical attention and how to document these potential injuries; and,
- Complete an annual assessment of current recreation programs and implement concussion prevention measures, as required.

Guidelines

If a Team Member witnesses another Team Member or Patron hit their head against a hard surface, the staff member will immediately remove the individual from any activity (if applicable). Team Members who witness or are made aware of an incident are required to report the incident as soon as possible to their supervisor/manager and complete an incident report HRS-F-003 within the applicable timelines as outline on the form. If a concussion is suspected, advise the individual to seek medical attention or depending on the severity of the injury, call an ambulance.

Training

New Team Members will receive concussion training during Corporate Orientation. An information poster will be placed on the JHSC Health and Safety Boards. This policy will be made available to all Team Members on the corporate “S” drive.

References

Reference: Government of Ontario, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport website:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/concussions/docs/mcsc_concussion_guide_en.pdf

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