



## TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN CONCUSSION PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

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**TITLE:** Concussion Prevention and Management Policy  
**POLICY NO:** POL-PW-01-2015  
**SUPERSEDES NO:** New Policy  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

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### **PURPOSE:**

The Township of West Lincoln 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.

This policy aligns 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.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **“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.

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 and symptoms may suggest a concussion:

- loss of consciousness
- headache
- seizure or convulsion
- dizziness
- balance problems
- confusion
- nausea or vomiting
- feeling slowed down
- drowsiness
- “pressure in head”
- more emotional
- blurred vision
- irritability
- sensitivity to light
- sadness
- amnesia
- fatigue or low energy
- feeling like “in a fog”
- nervous or anxious
- neck pain
- “don’t feel right”
- sensitivity to noise
- difficulty remembering
- difficulty concentrating

Signs and symptoms can be immediate or may be delayed by an 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.

*(Reference: Region of Niagara, Public Health)*

“**Employees**” are individuals who are directly involved with municipal recreation programming and/or the supervision of participants.

### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all:

- Township employees/contractors that are directly involved with recreation programming and/or supervision of participants
- Participants and/or parents/guardians of sport and recreation programs

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Township of West Lincoln will:

- Ensure that all participants and/or parents/guardians are aware of this policy.
- Provide information to program participants and/or parents/guardians that addresses concussion prevention, identification and management.
- Provide training on 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.

All Township of West Lincoln employees/contractors that are directly involved with recreation programming and/or supervision of participants will:

- Follow appropriate procedures related to Removal from Play in cases where concussion is suspected.
- Document all suspected concussions sustained while participating in Township of West Lincoln program using an Incident Report.
- Ensure that participants follow the 6 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 Township of West Lincoln about any current or previous concussions or concerns and ensure ongoing communication throughout the Return to Play process.

**IMPLEMENTATION:****Removal From Play (Suspected Concussion)**

- If an individual is conscious and suspected of having a concussion, he/she is to be immediately removed from play/activity.
- 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.”
- 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.

**6 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).

#### **APPENDIX, RELATED RESOURCES AND LINKS:**

(Note: All references refer to the current version and may be amended from time to time)

Websites:

[Niagara Region Public Health - Concussions and Minor Sports](#)

[Ontario Government - Concussions Web Portal](#)

[Parachute Canada - Concussions](#)

[Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sports - Active and Safe](#)

[Coaching Association of Canada - Concussion Awareness](#)

[Hockey Canada - Concussions](#)

Resources and Tools:

[Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Concussion Guidelines](#)

[Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool](#)

[Concussion Guidelines for Parents and Caregivers](#)

[Concussion Guidelines for Coaches and Trainers](#)

[Concussion Guidelines for the Athlete](#)

[Concussion Tool - Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation](#)

[Things to Know about Concussions](#)

[Parent Tip Sheet - A Parent's Guide to Dealing with Concussions](#)

[Concussion Guidelines for Return to Play](#)

[Parachute Canada - Active and Safe Concussion Toolkit](#)

[Active and Safe Program - Concussion 101](#)

[Hockey Canada - Concussion Awareness Apps](#)

[Coaching Association of Canada - Making Headway - Concussion E-learning](#)

[Parachute Canada - Concussion E-learning](#)

[Dr. Mike Evans - Concussions 101, A Primer for Parents and Kids](#)

[Dr. Mike Evans - Concussion Management and Return to Learn](#)

[Smart Hockey Video](#)