

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST – FAQ DOCUMENT

(March 2015)

1. Where can I find a copy of the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Law?

The law is titled “Student Athletes: Sudden Cardiac Arrest”. It is listed under Indiana Code as IC 20-34-8 and can be found at the following site:

<http://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2014/ic/titles/020/articles/034/chapters/008/>

2. Are there sample forms that I could use regarding the implementation of this law?

Yes, sample forms have been developed by the Indiana Department of Education and can be found on the IDOE website at <http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/health/sudden-cardiac-arrest>. Schools are not required to use these sample forms as they are simply provided for schools to use if they wish. Schools are welcome to develop and use their own forms as long as these forms meet the requirements of the law.

3. Would it be possible to combine the concussion educational forms with the sudden cardiac arrest educational forms?

Yes, the Concussion Law and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Law have very similar educational requirements for parents and student athletes. IDOE has created one acknowledgement and signature form that combines both of these laws together. IDOE suggests that schools print the “Heads Up” Concussion Fact Sheet on one side of a paper and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fact Sheet on the other side. Schools may also post these fact sheets in an electronic format for parents and student athletes to read.

4. Does this law, in regards to the educational materials and the return to play requirements, apply to all students?

Yes, this law applies to all students who participate in an interscholastic or intramural sport, including competitive and noncompetitive cheerleading. It applies to all student athletes, in any grade level, who participate in an organized athletic activity.

5. What is the definition of an interscholastic sport?

An interscholastic sport is defined as one that is sanctioned by the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA). These include the following for boys: baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, swimming, tennis, track and wrestling; and for girls: basketball, cross country, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and volleyball.

6. What is the definition of an intramural sport?

IHSAA states “an intramural contest occurs when all participants on both teams are members of one school”.

7. How does the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Law define “athletic activity”?

The SCA Law defines “athletic activity” as the following:

- an athletic contest or competition conducted between or among schools
- an intramural athletic contest or competition that is sponsored by or associated with a school
- competitive and noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with a school

8. With regard to the SCA Law, what other types of teams could be considered as an intramural sport?

Any team, comprised of student athletes, that is considered a “school-sponsored” team or whose coach is paid, compensated or officially recognized by the school administrator would be considered as an intramural sport.

9. Is cheerleading considered an interscholastic or intramural sport?

Yes, the SCA Law specifically mentions and includes competitive and noncompetitive cheerleading. Additionally, in Indiana, cheerleading is considered an intramural sport and at the federal level cheerleading is recognized as an interscholastic sport by the National Federation of High School Sports.

10. Are club sports considered intramural sports?

Club sports would be considered as intramural sports if all the participants of both teams are members of one school, or if the coach of the club sport is paid, compensated or officially recognized by the school administrator.

11. What about other students who do not fall under the legal definitions of this law?

For a student athlete, of any age or sport, the recommendation would be for the adults in charge to take symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest seriously. If these symptoms are suspected for any student, the recommendation would be to remove the student from play, notify the student’s parents and recommend that the student be evaluated by a licensed health care provider before allowing the student to return to practice or game play.

12. Does a student athlete have to be evaluated by a licensed health care provider before being allowed to return to play?

No, the law requires that the parent or guardian must be notified and the student athlete may only return to play with verbal permission from the parent or guardian. Verbal permission must be replaced with written permission within 24 hours.

13. What should be done if the parent or guardian does not send written permission to the coach?

The student athlete should not be allowed to participate, practice or compete in an athletic activity until the parent has sent written permission to return to play to the school.

14. What should be done if the student athlete continues to exhibit signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest after they have been returned to play upon written release by the parent?

The student athlete should be removed from play each time he/she exhibits symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest and should not be returned to play without a verbal and then a written follow-up release to play from the parents. Schools are encouraged to develop a school policy that addresses these procedures and describes what the school policy will be for students that exhibit these symptoms more than once. (For example, a school policy could state that a school will only accept two written return to play release notes from parents and if the student continues to exhibit signs and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, the parent written release would need to be replaced by a health care provider's written release.)

15. *Can an athletic trainer do an initial assessment of a student athlete that has symptoms suggestive of sudden cardiac arrest and release a student athlete to return to play?*

Yes, if a student athlete exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, the student may be assessed by an athletic trainer, if available. The athletic trainer can make a first assessment of the student athlete at the time of symptoms. If the student exhibits any of the emergency signs associated with sudden cardiac arrest, the student athlete should receive immediate medical attention.

If during this initial assessment, the student athlete does not exhibit any of the emergency signs associated with sudden cardiac arrest, but does exhibit any (even one) of the signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, sudden cardiac arrest should be suspected. At that time, the student athlete should be removed from play, the athlete's parents should be notified, and the athlete should not return to play until a parent or guardian's verbal permission has been obtained. The student athlete may not return to play until the parent or guardian's verbal permission has been replaced by a written release to return to play, even if the student athlete has been assessed by a health care professional.

An evaluation by a health care provider could be requested by the school, but a written release to play form must be completed by the parent or guardian in order for the student athlete to return to practice or competition.