

# Concussion Policy

## Policy Statement

Skate Ontario (SO) is focused on ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all skaters, coaches, officials, volunteers, staff, and all other participants. SO recognizes the potential severity of a head injury and the commitment and intent behind research to manage concussions. SO is committed to educating those involved with SO, creating awareness to help prevent injuries and appropriately managing any suspected concussions and diagnosed concussions.

## Scope

This policy will be enforced at all SO events, activities and programs with SO staff or those acting as agents of SO as instructors, facilitators or any other capacity as designated by SO.

This policy applies to:

- All skaters, officials, coaches, clubs and skating schools
- All participants that include
  - Individuals
  - Parents/guardians
  - Persons who interact with skaters, all defined as skater support personnel, including but not limited to team leaders, referees, medical/licensed healthcare professionals, paramedical or any other person working with, treating or assisting a skater or other individual
  - Persons employed by or engaged in activities, competitions, and programs with and/or hosted by SO, including but not limited to, directors of the Board, officers, employees and event volunteers of SO
  - Spectators

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Skate Canada Incidents of Injury Reporting and Management Policy and supporting procedure, the SO Removal-from-Sport Protocol and the SO Return-to-Sport Protocol

## Definitions

### **Concussion:**

- is a brain injury that causes 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)
- 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
- cannot normally be seen on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs
- can result in symptoms that are evident immediately or may evolve and persist over the course of hours, days or even months.

### **Designated Person:**

At each SO event, activity, or program with SO staff or those acting as agents of SO, SO will name a “designated person” who will have the following responsibilities:



In accordance with Rowan's Law, under the Removal-from-Sport Protocol for SO, the designated person(s) is/are responsible for ensuring that:

- An skater is immediately removed from further training, practice or competition if the skater has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained from a sport activity associated with SO
- If in the opinion of the designated person(s), there is an emergency and/or any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear – including those resulting from a suspected concussion, call 911;
- Removal of the skater from further training, practice or competition; and if the skater is under 18 years of age, the parent or guardian is informed of the removal;
- The skater, or the parent or guardian if the skater is under 18 years of age, is advised that the skater is required to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner before the skater will be permitted to return to training, practice or competition according to the Return-to-Sport Protocol
- A skater or, if the skater is under 18 years of age, the skater's parent or guardian receives the Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport Protocols for SO as soon as possible after the skater's removal
- Once removed, the skater is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition, except in accordance with the Return-to-Sport Protocol;

In accordance with Rowan's Law, under the Return-to-Sport Protocol for SO, the designated person(s) is/are responsible for ensuring that:

- A skater who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice or competition until permitted to do so in accordance with the Return-to-Sport Protocol
- When a skater has **not** been diagnosed with a concussion, the skater is only permitted to return to training, practice, or competition if the skater or, if the skater is under 18 years of age, the skater's parent or guardian provides confirmation to the designated person(s) about the outcome of the skater's medical assessment, specifically that the skater:
  - has undergone a medical assessment by the physician or nurse practitioner and has **not** been diagnosed as having a concussion, and
  - has been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition by a physician or nurse practitioner
- When a skater **is** diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the skater is not permitted to move on to unrestricted training, practice or competition unless the skater or, if the skater is under 18 years of age, the skater's parent or guardian provides a confirmation of medical clearance by the physician or nurse practitioner to the designated person(s)
- A skater is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition through the graduated Return-to-Sport steps unless the skater or, if the skater is under 18 years of age, the skater's parent or guardian has shared the medical advice or recommendations they received, if any, with the designated person(s)
- When a skater is diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the skater or, if the skater is under 18 years of age, the skater's parent/guardian has been informed of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to any other sport organization with which the skater is registered or school that the skater attends
- The regulation states that a designated person(s) may rely on the information received from a skater or, if the skater is under 18 years of age, from the skater's parent or guardian in carrying out their responsibilities under Return-to-Sport Protocol

## Accountabilities

All individuals and participants are responsible for:



- Being familiar with and understanding the provisions of this policy, the Removal-from-Sport protocol, Return-to-Sport protocol, as well as other applicable Skate Ontario and Skate Canada policies and protocols
- Supporting Skate Ontario's vision of providing the safest possible environment for all of our participants in the skating community
- Reporting all incidents of concussion, suspected and/or actual as outlined in the Skate Canada Incidents of Injury Reporting and Management Policy and supporting procedure
- Adhering to this policy and associated protocols as a minimum standard in addressing concussion injuries and the Return-to-Sport requirements
- Taking all applicable concussion and education training, as prescribed from time to time

Through this policy, SO is committed to the following actions regarding concussions:

1. Increasing awareness regarding what concussions are and the potential for serious complications.
2. Enforcing procedures and training that promote preventative actions to help reduce the number of concussions.
3. Providing procedures that support staff, its agents, volunteers and skaters in ensuring quick recognition and removal of any individual with a suspected concussion from SO activities.
4. Ensuring that following a suspected concussion there are clear steps for both the individual and SO to follow before a Return-to-Sport occurs to ensure the focus is on the individual's long-term health.

This policy has been written to ensure compliance with Rowan's Law and to complement the SO Removal-from-Sport Protocol, SO Return-to-Sport Protocol, the SO Codes of Conduct, the SO Rowan's Law acknowledgment forms, and resources made available on the SO website.

