

Concussions in Youth Athletes

Fifty (50) states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws which address concussions and protect the health and safety of young athletes. Little League Baseball, Incorporated (LLB) has compiled a summary of all currently existing state laws regarding concussions in youth athletes.

Some laws are only applicable to school-sponsored athletics or to activities taking place on school-owned property. Some laws are applicable to all youth sports organizations, whether affiliated or not with a school district. It is strongly recommended that local leagues consult with legal counsel in its jurisdiction to determine the applicability, if any, of state laws to its program regarding concussions.

In keeping with its focus on protecting the health, safety and welfare of children, LLB requires all leagues and teams to comply with all applicable laws and recommends the review of the information and training materials on concussions which are available free of charge on the Centers for Disease Control website at:

[CDC.GOV/HEADSUP/](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/)

Free CDC HEADS UP Microsite Provides Concussion Safety Info for Your Website

The microsite offers a simple way for you to share HEADS UP tools and concussion safety information directly through your own website. All content is maintained by the CDC and syndicated to your site, which means

that, once embedded, the microsite will automatically keep your site current with the latest HEADS UP content.

[Check out the microsite](#) and grab the embed code. For technical help please email: IMTech@cdc.gov.

Here are others ways to do your part to get concussion safety on every field:

- Download the HEADS UP concussion [app](#).
- Customize [CDC HEADS UP fact sheets and posters](#) with your league logo and colors.
- Take an [online training](#).

The microsite allows you to choose content by sport (baseball/softball) and provides color options to match your league. It includes links to popular HEADS UP resources, such as trainings and videos, as well as new sports-specific safety tips.

More information on how to review an individual state's concussion law can be found by clicking the particular state link below.

The information that follows is current up to and including June 19, 2017.

CALIFORNIA

The California Law is titled “Youth Sports Concussion Protocols,” became 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).

Section 124235 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.

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 of the California Educational Code 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 at 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>