



Sports Trainers in Community Australian Football Policy

The Management of Injuries and Medical Emergencies in Community Australian Football

Introduction

The AFL expects that football matches at all levels will be played in good quality environments and the safety of participants is central to that environment. As part of a risk management approach to the prevention of, and prompt attention to injuries in Australian Football, it is important that adequate and timely first aid is provided. In ideal situations one or more qualified trainers will be in attendance, generally attached to each team to provide the best possible support to participants.

Sports trainers and first aiders have been part of Australian Football since the origins of the game. They are part of the fabric of every club and play a key role in player preparation and safety at all levels.

In community Australian Football clubs, first aid is usually provided by sports trainers or by other volunteers with medical or higher level allied health (e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational health & safety) qualifications and experience. Sports trainers are likely to play a more major role when there is no-one else with medical or allied health qualifications at a game or training. It is important that sports trainers, and others, are well trained in the first aid needs specifically relevant to Australian Football at the level at which they are involved (e.g. Auskick, juniors, youth, seniors, females, talent pathway, AFL clubs, veterans etc).

In previously published recommendations the AFL has stated that:

- A qualified first aider is present where participants are under 16 years
- A qualified sports trainer is present where participants are 16 years and older.

Research Project

In 2009/10 the AFL, through its Research Board, engaged Ballarat University to conduct a significant research project, reviewing the roles, competencies and training of providers of first aid and trainer services for Australian Football. This policy focusing on the management of injuries and medical emergencies in community Australian Football has been developed as part of that research. As a result more comprehensive requirements will apply in community football and will be introduced from 2011.

The Australian Football League (AFL) believes that planning and practising what to do when an emergency occurs is an essential part of risk management. All football leagues and clubs must be conversant with first aid procedures and able to deal with emergencies so participants are well cared for. All leagues and clubs should ensure that:

- A person with current first aid qualifications is available at all football games and training sessions.
- An appropriately and adequately stocked first aid kit and well maintained sport-specific rescue/transport equipment are accessible at all training and competition venues.

A sports trainer or first aid provider involved with a football club or team should have a clear understanding of the role and importance of injury prevention and immediate injury management in football. They should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to first aid equipment and facilities, and their obligations in relation to duty of care and record keeping.

Minimum Requirements

Qualified Sports trainers (as recognised by the AFL*) meet or exceed the minimum requirements of this policy.

At a minimum, at least one person competent in emergency management procedures and responses must be in attendance at all matches/competitions and, where practical, training/practice sessions. This person must be competent in:

1. Emergency planning—including ensuring access to a telephone, venue access for emergency vehicles and access to appropriate and adequate first aid equipment and supplies.
2. On-field assessment of injured participants—including the **STOP** (Stop, Talk, Observe, Prevent) and **TOTAPS** (Talk, Observe, Touch, Active movement, Passive movement & Skills test – some of which will be completed off field). This includes the immediate management of severe injuries and life threatening medical emergencies including spinal & neck injuries; concussion & intracranial (brain) injuries; unconscious casualties; airway/respiratory distress such as choking, airway obstructions & asthma.
3. On-field communication—including signals, team work and liaising with the umpire and others in official capacities.
4. Understanding emergency response priorities and applying emergency procedures — including the **(DRSABCD)** Danger, Response, Send for help, Airways, Breathing, and CPR and Defibrillation procedure.
5. Calling an ambulance
6. Transporting injured participants—including lifts, carries and use of an appropriate stretcher (pole and scoop).

Key Policy directives:

- Matches

- **There must be at least one person with the above competencies in attendance at a match/competition, otherwise the activity should be postponed, rescheduled or cancelled until such time as a suitably competent person is able to attend.**
 - **This policy must be complied with at youth and senior matches.** The AFL Emergency Response Coordinator role and training (see next section for definition) – meets the minimum standards.
 - **At AFL Auskick Centres and junior matches (up to Under 12), generally a person with a current, nationally accredited first aid certificate* will be acceptable if someone with a higher level trainer accreditation/qualification is not available.** *Must include assessed competencies HLTF301B (Apply First Aid) or HLTF201 (Provide Emergency Life Support)

- Training

- **It is recommended that there is at least one person with the above competencies in attendance at all training/practice sessions. In any case the club, generally through the coach, will be responsible for providing a safe training environment if there is no other person with those competencies present at training.** Some coaches may have the required competencies through their own personal or professional training.

- **General**

- Generally, it is highly recommended that at least one person with an AFL recognised sports trainer or first aid qualification is in attendance at all training/practice sessions and matches/competitions.

In the longer term, the AFL vision is to have as many people with higher level trainer qualifications serving the game as possible. The AFL is committed to supporting leagues, clubs and teams in their efforts to meet the requirements of this policy. The AFL will therefore work towards ensuring that geographically and financially accessible football-related first aid and sports trainer training courses are available to anyone wishing to attend.

AFL Requirements for matches and training

| Level | | Senior 18+ | Youth 13-17 | Auskick/Junior 5-12 |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Match</i> | Recommended: | Trainer | Trainer | Trainer |
| | Minimum: | ERC | ERC | Current First Aid |
| <i>Training*</i> | Ideal: | Trainer | Trainer | Trainer |
| | Recommended: | ERC | ERC | Current First Aid |

ERC: *Emergency Response Coordinator*

* Note: Overall **responsibility of clubs** to provide safe training environment