

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL FOR SAILING AND/OR OTHER ACTIVITIES

What is concussion?

Concussion is a brain injury and can be caused by a direct or indirect blow to the sailor's head or body. Concussion typically results in an immediate onset of short-lived signs and symptoms. Most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness. However in some cases, the signs and symptoms of concussion may evolve over a number of minutes or hours.

Concussion must be taken very seriously.

Any sailor with a suspected concussion **MUST** be removed immediately from the training session or activity. The sailor should be medically assessed. They **MUST** not be left alone.

What causes concussion?

Concussions can be caused by a direct blow to the head or body that can occur when the sailor is hit by the boom or in the case of a high performance sailing when the body or head collide with any part of the boat.

Immediately following a suspected concussion the brain is susceptible to further significant damage in the event of another impact, therefore the sailor **MUST** be immediately removed from the water.

What are the visible signs of suspected concussion? Presence of any one or more of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

Confusion

Amnesia/short term memory loss concerning what just happened

Blurred vision

Dazed or blank look

Dizziness

Clutching head

Pressure in head

Headache

Emotional/Sadness

Irritability

Suspected or confirmed loss of consciousness

Loss of responsiveness

Poor balance in the boat/ falling over

Nausea/vomiting

Tiredness/low energy

Drowsiness

Stating they "Don't feel right"

Questions to ask:

"What venue are we at today?" or "Where are we now?" "What time of day is it?"

"How did you get here today?" or "What was your last competition?"

"What were you doing this time last week?"

RECOGNISE AND REMOVE

What must happen to the sailor after they have a suspected concussion?

The sailor must be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED from the activity and must not return.

The sailor must not be left alone.

The sailor must always be in the care of a responsible adult who is informed of the sailor's suspected concussion.

The sailor must not drive a vehicle.

The sailor should be medically assessed as soon as possible.

Considerations when running sessions. 'Adult On Call'.

In order to implement correct procedure when running coaching sessions the coach must have a system in place to ensure the safety of a sailor with suspected concussion.

The coach must have the contact number of an assigned Adult who is 'On-call' and nearby.

This Adult should have the medical consent forms of all sailors involved in the session.

When a sailor has suspected concussion the coach phones/radios the on-call adult and arranges to

meet them at a designated rendezvous point on shore.

The adult on call should make arrangements for the sailor to receive further medical attention.

Always remembering to never leave the sailor alone

The sailor must not return to the session, and specifically must not return to sailing on the same day of a suspected concussion.

In all cases of suspected concussion it is recommended that the sailor is referred to a medical or healthcare professional for diagnosis and advice, even if the symptoms resolve.

ONGOING MANAGEMENT OF A CONCUSSION OR SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

Most concussions resolve within 7-10 days, but it is advised that anybody who has had a *suspected concussion* is reviewed and assessed prior to returning to sailing, by a medical professional who has experience in dealing with concussion.

If the sailor has had a diagnosis by a medical professional of a concussion, then the sailor must not return to sailing for a period of 14 days following the diagnosis and only then if the previous 72 hours are symptom-free. We suggest that you get a full review by a medical professional before returning to sailing.