

AUSTRALIAN SAILING LIMITED

Concussion Policy

Policy Reference No.	CONCUSSION/001
Area of Application	All Departments
Responsibility	
Related Policies	
Approved By	Australian Sailing Board
Valid From	30/07/2024
Date of Next Review	01/07/2026

Purpose

This policy will help to ensure Australian Sailing:

- meets its duty of care in relation to the health and safety of our competitors, officials and volunteers, instructors and coaches, and visitors who attend our events, functions, and other activities.
- will help to create a safe sporting environment by providing important information about how to recognise and manage concussion.
- ensure that any person with a suspected concussion receives timely and appropriate advice and care to enable them to safely return to everyday activities and sport.

Scope

This policy applies to Australian Sailing events including sailing competitions, sailing practice and other functions.

Policy

Australian Sailing adheres to the recommendations of the Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport released in February 2024 by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in collaboration with Sports Medicine Australia. Under these guidelines, any athlete with a suspected concussion should be removed from play immediately.

[A copy of the Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport can be obtained via the link below.](#)

<https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/>

Direct link to document (as of 26/09/2024)

https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1133994/37382_Concussion-Guidelines-for-community-and-youth-FA-acc-v2.pdf

The Concussion Policy of any host organisation utilised for Australian Sailing activities must be followed in the first instance, If the host organisation does not have a concussion policy, then this policy will be followed as a minimum.

What is Concussion

Concussion is a disturbance in brain function caused by direct or indirect force to the head. Concussion results in a variety of signs & symptoms, some are very subtle, and most do not result in a loss of consciousness. Rest followed by gradual return to play is the main treatment. Common causes of concussion in sailing are boom strike and falls.

Concussion Management:

1. **Recognise.** A potential head injury or concussion must be acknowledged if an athlete has any signs, symptoms or fails to answer any of the memory questions after a head knock or body collision. [Concussion Recognition Tool CRT6](#) can be used to help identify concussion.
2. **Remove.** Any participant with signs or symptoms of a potential head injury or concussion must be removed from the activity immediately and must not be allowed to return to participation on the same day unless cleared by a medical practitioner. Always adhere to the first aid rules, including airway, breathing, circulation, and spinal immobilisation.
3. **Rest.** If there was an observable knock to the head, the participant must be taken through the concussion assessment and even if no other signs or symptoms are present, they must have a mandatory 24–48-hour rest from activities. Signs and symptoms of concussion may emerge up to 48 hours after the impact.
4. **Refer.** All participants with a potential head injury or suspected concussion need a medical assessment by a registered healthcare practitioner trained in concussion management as soon as possible. If there are any doubts about the participant or red flags (such as neck pain, severe headache, vomiting, increasing confusion or change in conscious state) call an ambulance or refer to the emergency department. The [Concussion Referral & Clearance Form](#) should be given to the participant or family member/guardian. The latter should be returned once signed by the healthcare practitioner.

N.B. Ideally sportspeople should have a baseline assessment of cognitive function which may be accessed and a comparison made after a head injury

Return to Sport:

The [Graded Return to Sport Framework](#) must be followed before participants are allowed to return to sport. Sailing is not considered a contact or collision sport, but as it is a water sport, increased supervision is required during return to on-water activities.

Light physical activity irrespective of mild symptoms can begin after 24-48 hours. This has been shown to improve outcomes after a concussion.

Learning and work activities should also be gradually reintroduced after 24-48 hours.

Participants may return to on-water activities if they are symptom-free during off-water physical activities, have returned to full learning and work activities, **and are under the supervision of a responsible person.**

Junior participants should not return to contact sports training for a minimum of 14 days.

Recovery from concussion varies from person to person, and injury to injury.

Children and adolescents often take longer to recover from a concussion than adults and should be seen by a healthcare practitioner trained in concussion management if symptoms are prolonged. If recognised and appropriately managed most people will recover from their symptoms.

Appendix:

Resources:

- [Concussion in Australian Sport](#)
 - OR; <https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/>
- [Concussion Recognition Tool 6](#)
 - OR; <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/57/11/692.full.pdf>
- [Concussion Referral Form](#)
 - OR;
https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1133929/3738_2_Concussion-referral-and-clearance-form-FA-acc.pdf
- [Graded Return to Sport Framework](#)
 - OR;
https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1133466/GRADDED-RETURN-TO-SPORT-FRAMEWORK-COMMUNITY-AND-YOUTH.pdf