

****Ohio's return-to-play law came into effect on April 19, 2013****



Return-to-Play Law: What Coaches & Referees Need to Know – Interscholastic Athletics

Training In Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

COACHES: The Pupil Activity Permit (PAP) is necessary for all individuals who wish to direct, supervise or coach a program in the schools of Ohio involving athletics, routine or regular physical activity, or health and safety considerations, whether it is done on a paid or volunteer basis. PAPs are issued and regulated by the [Ohio Department of Education](#).

Those wishing to coach interscholastic athletics must hold a [Pupil Activity Permit](#) (PAP) issued by the [Ohio Department of Education](#). Coaches who already have a current PAP will be required to present evidence that they have successfully completed a training program in recognizing the symptoms of concussions and head injuries that is linked on the [Department of Health's website](#) **or** a training program authorized and required by an organization that regulates interscholastic conferences or events in order to renew their permit (permit renewals occurs every three-years ORC 3319.303).

Those who apply for a first-time Pupil Activity Permit, on or after April 19, 2013, to coach interscholastic athletics will be required to successfully complete a training program that is specifically focused on concussions as part of the requirements to obtain a permit.

REFEREES: Referees for interscholastic athletics must either:

- 1) Hold a Pupil Activity Permit (see above) for coaching interscholastic athletics. Under the law (ORC 3319.303), individuals who possess a current permit will be required, as a condition of renewing their Pupil Activity Permit, to present evidence that the individual has successfully completed, within the previous three years, a training program in recognizing the symptoms of concussions and head injuries that is linked on the [Department of Health's website](#) or a training program authorized and required by an organization that regulates interscholastic conferences or events.
- OR-**
- 2) Successfully complete within the previous three years, an online training program in recognizing the symptoms of concussions and head injuries that is linked on the [Department of Health's website](#) or a training program authorized and required by an organization that regulates interscholastic conferences or events.

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Online Training

The current, free online trainings that have been approved by ODH to meet the training requirement for coaches and referees are listed on the [Department of Health's website](#).

PLEASE NOTE: All 3 courses offer a “certificate of completion” upon successful passage.

Removal from Play

Coaches, referees or officials must remove an athlete if the athlete is exhibiting the signs and symptoms of a concussion during practice or a game. These include:

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Is confused about assignment or position.
- Forgets plays.
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows behavior or personality changes (irritability, sadness, nervousness, feeling more emotional).
- Can't recall events before or after hit or fall.
- Any headache or “pressure” in head. (How badly it hurts does not matter.)
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Double or blurry vision.
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.
- Concentration or memory problems.
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right.”
- Trouble falling asleep.
- Sleeping more or less than usual.

The athlete cannot return to play on the same day that he or she is removed.

Medical Clearance to Return to Play

Under Ohio law (ORC 3313.539 and ORC 3707.511), a physician must provide **WRITTEN** clearance for an athlete to return to play. Physicians (M.D. or D.O.) and Diplomates in either Chiropractic Neurology or Chiropractic Sports Medicine and Certified Chiropractic Sports Physicians who are listed in the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians (ACBSP) Concussion Registry will be considered able to meet the recommended standards of care and are able to independently clear youth athletes to return to play. All other licensed health care professionals must work in coordination or consultation with a physician (M.D. or D.O.), as written in HB 143.

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A school district board of education or governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school may authorize a licensed healthcare professional to make an assessment or grant a clearance only if the professional is acting in accordance with one of the following, as applicable to the professional's authority to practice in this state:

- In consultation with a physician;
- Pursuant to the referral of a physician;
- In collaboration with a physician;
- Under the supervision of a physician.

It is important to review your school's policy regarding what healthcare providers are authorized to clear an athlete to return-to-play.

Medical Review Clearance Forms

For school sports that are members of the Ohio High School Athletic Association, there is an OHSAA sanctioned form available at: ohsaa.org/medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf

For youth sports organizations and schools that are not part of OHSAA, there is no specific form that must be filled out by a healthcare provider authorizing an athlete to return to play; however, the Ohio Department of Health has made one [available here](#).

For More Information

Ohio Department of Health - Ohio's Return to Play Law:

<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/vipp/child/returntoplay/Return-to-Play---Ohio-Youth-Concussion-Law>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Head's Up in Youth Sports:

<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index.html>

Ohio Department of Education – Pupil Activity Permit:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1328&ContentID=84483&Content=126368>