

CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

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To: CIAC Member School Principals and Athletic Directors  
From: CIAC Staff  
Re: **New Rules / Regulations / Laws**  
Date: August, 2014

Please be aware that several new rules, regulations or state laws were enacted this past year which will impact all public schools and CIAC member schools during the 2014-15 school year. Several new CIAC rules and state laws went into effect as of July 1, 2014. Please note the following:

1. **Effective July 1, 2014 by CIAC rules and July 1, 2015 by State Statute – Public Act No. 14-66** – a requirement that local boards of education implement a concussion education plan for student-athletes and their parents and that all parents and student-athletes complete an informed consent form provided by the school before a student may participate in any CIAC sports. Starting July 1, 2015, these requirements are extended to all students and parents K-12 where the student is participating in interscholastic sports or an intramural athletic program including dance and cheer.

The CIAC Board of Control, at its November 2013, meeting passed a new rule that requires all member schools to educate all student-athletes and their parents on concussions beginning July 1, 2014. The mandatory topics that must be covered include the following:

- the recognition of signs and symptoms of concussion
- the means of obtaining proper medical treatment for a person suspected of sustaining a concussion
- the nature and risks of a concussion, including the danger in continuing to engage in athletic activity after sustaining a concussion
- the proper procedures for allowing a student who has sustained a concussion to return to athletic activity
- current best practices in the prevention and treatment of concussion

CIAC also requires that all student-athletes and their parents sign an informed consent form developed by the school that attests they are aware of the signs and symptoms of concussion and return-to-play requirements prior to participation in any athletic activity.

Each member school is required to develop and implement the educational plan that is most appropriate for their district as long as the required topics are covered. The implementation of the plan can be achieved through utilizing written materials, online training, videos or in-person training. CIAC recommends that, whenever possible, in-person training be utilized at the required pre-season meeting for parents and athletes. Schools may use any or all of the delivery methods mentioned above to develop a plan that best fits the demographics of their district. These regulations are designed to comply with the new concussion law passed in the 2014 legislative session.

Further, CIAC recommends that each school district develop and implement a plan for the management of sports-related concussion that can be included with information provided to parents and student-athletes. Several different tools, approved by the Connecticut Medical Society, The Connecticut Association of Athletic Trainers and the CIAC, which can be used to assist schools in the education of parents and student-athletes can be found on the CIAC web site or go to [www.concussioncentral.CIACsports.com](http://www.concussioncentral.CIACsports.com). CIAC member schools must make every effort to ensure the material is presented and understood.

2. **Effective July 1, 2014 by State Statute for all schools K-12 – Parent notification when an athlete is removed from play who may have sustained a concussion – Public Act No. 14-66** – The coach of any intramural or interscholastic athletics shall immediately remove a student-athlete from participating in any intramural or interscholastic athletic activity who (a) is observed to exhibit signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion following an observed or suspected blow to the head or body, or (b) is diagnosed with a concussion, regardless of when such concussion may have occurred. Upon such removal, a qualified school employee, as defined in subsection (3) of section 10-212a, shall notify the student-athlete’s parent or legal guardian that the student-athlete has exhibited such signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion or has been diagnosed with a concussion. Such qualified school employee shall provide such notification not later than twenty-four hours after such removal and shall make a reasonable effort to provide such notification immediately after such removal.

Schools are advised to establish local policy determining who is the “qualified school employee” that will be responsible for contacting the parent/legal guardian within the twenty-four (24) hour window. Further, schools are advised to have specific protocol in place to report all injuries to the appropriate medical personnel in the school/district.

3. **Effective July 1, 2014 by State Statute – Public Act No. 14-66 – Annual reporting of all concussions by schools K-12** – For the school year commencing July 1, 2014, and annually thereafter, the State Board of Education shall require all local and regional school districts to collect and report all occurrences of concussions to the board. Each report shall contain, if known: (1) the nature and extent of the concussion, and (2) the circumstances in which the student sustained the concussion.

Schools will now be responsible for reporting all concussions sustained by any student regardless of where it occurred – on the playground, skateboarding, at home, in PE class, on the playing field and so on. The State Department of Education has not developed the reporting form to date; however, schools must begin to collect data as of July 1, 2014. Consequently, all public schools must develop local policy and protocol on the collection and reporting of this data which includes specifics such as who will be responsible for reporting the data, to whom the data will be reported, and who will be preparing the district data report to the SDE.

4. **Effective January 1, 2015 – Public Act No. 14-66 – Development of a refresher course on concussions for all coaches and specific requirements for football coaches** – The State Board of Education shall develop or approve a refresher course regarding concussions. Such refresher course shall include, but not be limited to, (a) an overview of key recognition and safety practices, (b) an update on medical developments and current best practices in the field of concussion research, prevention and treatment, (c) an update on new relevant federal, state and local laws and regulations, and (d) for football coaches, current best practices regarding coaching the sport of football, including, but not limited to, frequency of games and full contact practices and scrimmages as identified by the governing authority for intramural and interscholastic athletics.

CIAC in conjunction with the Connecticut Coaches Education Program (CCEP) has developed a three hour module that is designed specifically for football coaches and will meet the requirements under the new law. CCEP began offering the course to leagues as of June 2014 and the SDE will recognize the course retroactively. If your football coaches have not completed the three hour refresher course, they must do so prior to spring football 2015.

5. **Football Contact Practices Limitations – Effective starting with spring football 2014 by CIAC rules** – Football Contact Practice Limitations – Following the conclusion of the 2013 football season, the CIAC worked with its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and Football Committee to establish new policy on the amount of permitted contact in football practice. The new regulations were created after examining language from other state associations and reviewing the results of surveys sent to all Connecticut high school football coaches. The changes in person-to-person contact practice limitations which will apply to spring, pre- and regular season football beginning in the spring of 2014 are as follows:

- During weeks two through four of the pre-season, a coach may conduct person-to-person contact drills up to 120 minutes during practice plus conduct one full scrimmage or seven-on-seven scrimmage per week under game-like conditions. If a second scrimmage is conducted, the time (60 minutes) must be deducted from the 120 minutes allowed. A jamboree is considered a full scrimmage.

- From the start of the regular season through Thanksgiving, a coach may conduct person-to-person contact drills up to 90 minutes per week.
- During the post-season, a coach may conduct person-to-person contact drills up to 60 minutes per week.
- In spring football, a coach may conduct person-to-person contact drills up to 120 minutes in the seven days of allowed contact. One inter-squad scrimmage is allowed but it must be part of the 120 minutes of allowed contact.
- Teams may continue to dress in full pads for practices, but should only participate in live action in accordance with the above-stated time regulations for full-contact practice. It is assumed that when players are in shells (shorts, shoulder pads, helmets), no live action will occur. These regulations are intended to limit live action and not the number of practices a team may participate in using full pads. A team may participate in “air,” “bags,” “wrap,” and “thud” drills and simulations at any point. The contact levels are defined below.

Definitions:

- **Full contact** – football drills or live game simulations where “live action” occurs (11 on 11 or 7 on 7)
- **Live contact** – contact at game speed where players execute full tackles at a competitive pace taking players to the ground
- **Air** – players run unopposed without bags or any opposition
- **Bags** – activity is executed against a bag, shield or pad to allow for a soft-contact surface with or without the resistance of a teammate or coach standing behind the bag
- **Wrap** – drills run at full speed until contact, which is above the waist with the players remaining on their feet
- **Thud** – same as a wrap but the tempo is competitive with no pre-determined winner and the players are not tackling to the ground

Note: It is anticipated further changes in contact rules in football will occur for 2015 and beyond. Schools will be kept apprised of any changes.

Please visit the CIAC web site – “Concussion Central” – for additional information and resources on concussion and recommended material to be used in educating parents and student-athletes. Go to the CIAC home page or [www.concussioncentral.CIACsports.com](http://www.concussioncentral.CIACsports.com).