

Health & Safety Guidance

Concussion Guidance for the sport of swimming

This guidance is for professionals and volunteers working in the swimming industry and in particular Swim England affiliated swimming clubs and is aimed at safe guarding competitive swimmers, and swimmers under instruction.

Concussion is the most common type of traumatic brain injury. The terms mild brain injury, mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI), mild head injury (MHI), minor head trauma, and concussion may be used interchangeably. Frequently defined as a head injury with a temporary loss of brain function, concussion causes a variety of physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms, which may not be recognized if subtle.

A variety of signs accompany concussion including somatic (such as headache), cognitive (such as feeling in a fog), emotional (such as emotional changeability), physical signs (such as loss of consciousness or amnesia), behavioral changes (such as irritability), cognitive impairment (such as slowed reaction times), and/or sleep disturbances. Fewer than 10% of sports-related concussions among children are associated with loss of consciousness.

Due to varying definitions and possible underreporting, the rate at which concussion occurs annually is not accurately known, but is estimated to be more than 6 per 1,000 people. Common causes include sports injuries, bicycle accidents, car accidents, and falls, the latter two being the most frequent causes among adults. In addition to a blow to the head, concussion may be caused by acceleration forces without a direct impact as in diving from high platforms with a head first entry.

Although usually associated with contact sports where there is a much more detailed history of injury the possibility of incurring a concussion impact injury in swimming is possible. The most likely occurrences will be from:

- Poorly executed competitive dives from starting platforms
- Poorly executed plunge dives from the poolside
- Head impact to the diver/jumper into a pool in recreational play on the pool edge/side or pool floor.
- Head to head impact in water polo
- Head to body or pool walls from poorly executed lifts in synchronised swimming
- Any poorly executed dive from boards where the head takes undue force on impact with the water or pool floor.
- Head to head clashes when training in a lane where swimmers are swimming in a circular rotation on back crawl and head to feet when swimmers are training in a lane where swimmers are swimming in a circular rotation performing breast stroke.

The Sport + Recreation Alliance has taken the lead on behalf of the major contact sports such as rugby and football to publish a guidance document entitled "Concussion Guidelines for the Education Sector" that gives details on how to recognise concussion, administer first aid

and recovery at

http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/sites/sportandrecreation.org.uk/files/web/documents/pdf/Concussion%20guidelines%20for%20the%20education%20sector_June2015.pdf

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Readers are advised that the guidance or advice given in this information sheet is not inclusive and any decisions on swimming pool design should first be discussed with a member of the Swim England's Facilities Team. Contact details: facilities@swimming.org or telephone: 01509 618700.