

Establishing a Position on Employee Athletic Participation

Athletic participation may be a requirement of one's job responsibilities. It's important to understand coaching participation is very different from competitive participation, which is why it is important educational organizations establish a specific policy defining risks, hazards and appropriate coaching participation standards.

When developing a safety policy on coaching participation, consider including information on following topics:

- Appropriate, non-aggressive coaching techniques
- Rules on refraining from physical contact
- Suggested warm-up exercises
- Definition of coaching facilitation and participation vs competitive participation
- Guidelines avoiding impact sports including kicking/jumping as well as forceful throwing and rotational movements
- Guidelines for specific sports relevant for your organization – **see examples below**

Wrestling

- Staff should never actively participate in wrestling to demonstrate holds or techniques
- Staff should use a senior or experienced team member to demonstrate holds and techniques to others while "talking" them through the process

Football

- Absolutely no tackle football allowed
- Blocking should be passive
- When teaching plays, staff should "walk through" the techniques
- Staff positions should remain passive, i.e., officiating

Basketball

- Staff should only play the guard position
- Staff should not play under the basket
- Staff should not dive after balls
- Feet should remain on the floor
- Staff should remain one arm's length distance from others
- Staff should not drive to the basket or fast break

Softball

- Staff should never block base paths, throw with excessive force or dive for the ball
- Staff should only bat when hitting practice balls to the team

Sample Memorandum

To: All coaching staff
From: Superintendent
Re: Worker's Compensation Safety Guidelines for Coaches

It has been requested by our worker's compensation insurance carrier that we develop and enforce written guidelines that address work related injuries which are caused by participating in sports activities. It is critical we always keep all coaches safe while working with and teaching our students. Therefore, we've established guidelines, which limit participation of coaches to instruction only.

The intent of this guideline is to protect our coaching staff. It is the expectation of the (organization name) that each coach continues to use his/her professional judgment when working with students.

[attach safety policy]

Should you have any questions, please contact (name) at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Employee/Coach Name: _____

Employee/Coach Signature: _____

Date: _____

Once an established policy is developed, ensure participating staff are notified. See sample memorandum (above). Require employees to sign off on the policy after they've read, understood and intend to comply with the guidelines the company has determined.

Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.