



NFHS Position Statements: A Guiding Document

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

Since its inception in 1996, the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) has provided information and made recommendation to the NFHS membership, staff, and board of directors concerning sports medicine issues as they relate to rules writing, as well as the other programs and services of the NFHS. To that end, the NFHS SMAC is expected to regularly “develop, review and revise position statements and guidelines to assist the NFHS leadership and membership in making informed decisions that contribute to minimizing risk for participation.” This document provides the NFHS SMAC guidance and consistency in this process.

Development:

The NFHS SMAC should give strong consideration to the development of a position statement in the following situations:

1. In response to a request by the NFHS Board of Directors or Administration.
2. In response to a request by a member state association.
3. When the NFHS SMAC anticipates that the member associations would benefit from more information or direction on a specific risk minimization, medical or safety issue.
4. When a review of the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIO) data uncovers a potential or emerging risk minimization, medical or safety issue.
5. To assist member state associations with compliance of current or forthcoming legislation that directly relates to high school sports medicine issues.

In developing a position statement, the NFHS SMAC must be diligent in providing information that will be easily understood by member state association and school personnel. While valid injury data and medical evidence should be cited, position statements, in most cases, must be written primarily for an audience without medical training (state association personnel, administrators, coaches, officials, parents, etc.).

In addition to risk minimization, the NFHS SMAC must also consider the potential impact upon already existing rules, participation equity, and the potential for unintended consequences. All current position statements and guidelines and any education courses (NFHSLearn.com) produced by the NFHS SMAC must also be carefully reviewed for possible contradictory or conflicting information.

Review:

1. Each position statement will be reviewed every three to four years. Outcomes of such reviews may include minor changes (including minor language and technical changes) and updating references. More significant and comprehensive changes should be considered a **revision** (see below).
2. A position statement will be subject to review by the NFHS SMAC anytime the committee determines that new information or evidence dictates that the position statement *may* need to be revised.

Revision:

A position statement will be subject to revision by the NFHS SMAC anytime the committee determines that new information, evidence or legislation dictates that the position statement needs to be revised.

Retraction:

A position statement may be retracted, if the NFHS SMAC determines that the topic of the position statement is no longer pertinent to the NFHS or associate members.

October 2025

October 2022

October 2018

April 2015

April 2012

DISCLAIMER – NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time.