



Sample Emergency Action Plan

This sample emergency plan is provided by the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators (AACCA) as an example of how to prepare an Emergency Team to take proper action in the event of a serious injury during participation in cheer or dance.

It is important to note that according to the AACCA Cheer Safety Manual, the first priority in any safety program should be prevention of injuries from occurring in the first place. However, accidents and injuries are inherent with sports participation, and the proper preparation and rehearsal on the part of the Emergency Team will enable each emergency situation to be managed appropriately and effectively. Proper preparation and practice of an emergency plan will help get necessary medical attention to the injured athlete in the fastest possible manner and may avoid escalation of the injury to a more severe level.

Preparation:

Before you begin developing your own plan based on your situation, review the following:

- The coach or someone in attendance at the practice, game or performance should be CPR certified and complete a Sports First Aid course like that offered by the Red Cross or NFHS. If an automated external defibrillation AED device is available, supervisory staff should be trained in its proper use.
- If there is access to a school nurse or athletic trainer, develop this plan in conjunction with them and utilize their expertise.
- Each venue needs a different plan. If there is an injury at a game, the plan will likely differ than if you have an injury during practice when there are no officials and likely no emergency or athletic training staff immediately available.
- Is there access to a telephone? A land-based line is preferred, but that is not always an option. Be sure to have ready access to a means of communication to emergency services.
- In the event of emergency personnel being needed, what is the address of your location, as well as any specific streets or intersections that will help them get to the injured cheerleader in the fastest manner possible?
- Have all necessary forms such as general information forms to contact parents, medical allergies notices, medical release forms, etc.
- Remember that in developing the plan and assigning roles, at least two participants should be assigned each task. This helps them complete their task with a peer and helps account for a situation where one of those assigned to a task is the injured party or is not present.
- The coach should stay with the injured athlete to supervise and attend to their needs. Once emergency personnel have left with the injured athlete, there a staff member must remain with the team to remain in a supervisory role. Once the team is properly dispersed or other

supervision is in place, and the parents and administration have been made aware of the situation, then the coach can join the athlete wherever emergency services are being held.

The Plan

-Assignments

Once it has been established that this is an emergency situation, the following steps should be taken:

1. The coach or proper supervisory staff (such as an adult assistant coach or certified athletic trainer) should stay with the injured athlete. The injured athlete is the most important person needing supervision. Any necessary first aid procedures should be taken and the injured athlete should be observed for any changes that warrant assistance.
2. At least two participants should call 9-1-1 or another local emergency number if 9-1-1 is not an available option. This number and a sample script along with the site address and location should be clearly printed and readily available to those assigned this task. A sample call sheet is included at the end of this sample plan. Obviously this role is very important and should be assigned to those mature and composed enough to complete the task.
3. At least two participants should be assigned to keep other students from entering the area so that a scene is not created that will hamper emergency efforts.
4. At least two participants should contact the athletic trainer or school nurse if that is an option.
5. At least two participants should be assigned to be stationed at various points along the path an ambulance and emergency personnel will use to access the injured cheerleader. An example of this may be to have a group stationed outside the gym doors in the hallway, a group at the end of the hallway where the entrance is to a parking lot, a group in the parking lot and even a group near the road where the ambulance would turn into the parking lot. The role of each of these groups is to visually cue the emergency personnel and direct them to the injured cheerleader via the next group up the path.
6. Any remaining participants should keep back from the injured cheerleader to allow for emergency procedures to be administered and to minimize the psychological effects of comments or concerned looks by the injured athlete's peers.

Once emergency personnel have arrived, allow them access and give any necessary medical information including the mode of the injury, any relevant medical history, medical allergies or directives from her information sheet. A sample information sheet is provided at the end of this sample plan.

If the emergency requires transportation in an emergency vehicle, be sure to have proper supervision of the remaining team before leaving with the injured athlete. If no other supervisory staff is available, the coach should allow the emergency crew to accompany the injured athlete to the hospital, find out where she will be transported, give the crew a card with your telephone number in the event of any

changes, and then attend to the rest of the team as they will need to remain under proper supervision. Be sure to immediately contact the injured participant's parent or guardian with a summary of the situation and the location where their child is being transported. Once the parents/guardians have been notified, contact your athletic director, principal or other supervisor to inform them of the situation and where the athlete is being transported.

Once the remainder of the team has been properly dispersed to their parents, guardians or other approved supervision has been provided, the coach can make their way to see the injured athlete and check on their progress.

Practice It

Once all assignments have been made and everyone understands their role, the plan should be practiced similar to any emergency procedure such as a fire drill.

Explain that you are going to do a drill of the emergency plan and clarify that the 9-1-1 group is not to actually call 9-1-1 but that they should go through the script and pretend to speak to the operator/dispatcher. Each member of the group should practice this role. Send everyone else to their respective sites and have them immediately return with any concerns or issues such as locked doors, chained or fenced-in access roads, etc. What may be a perfectly good plan at 8:30 am when you created it may no longer be a good plan at 4:30 pm when school is out and the environment may change.

Make any necessary changes and submit to your supervisor for final approval. Continue to practice the drill daily until you feel everyone knows their roles, acts in a timely manner and is prepared in the event of an emergency. Practice the plan monthly to keep everyone prepared to act should they need to.

More information on cheerleading safety education including downloadable forms and updates to this sample plan can be found at <http://www.acca.org>