



SAFETY

Principles of Safety



REVISED 2/19

OBJECTIVES

- To understand injury prevention techniques
- To understand the importance of protective equipment
- To understand the value of warm-up
- To understand on-ice safety precautions

INJURY PREVENTION

Virtually all injuries sustained by participants will be caused by lack of skill and will be minor in nature. As a coach, you should strive to minimize the chance of injury occurring, particularly injuries that could be caused by faulty equipment or unsafe facilities.

If we can identify the causes of injuries, we can think of ways to reduce or prevent them. The following is a list of potential injury prevention techniques you can use:

1. All coaches should have a basic knowledge of first aid. If you do not, you should attempt to take a basic first aid course as soon as possible.
2. Get information on the health status of your players. This can be done by:
 - getting a health history from parents
 - getting reports on previous injuries
 - health insurance number
3. Try to anticipate problems that could arise on the ice.
 - Check out facilities and equipment for potential problems.
4. Don't force players who have been injured back too soon.
 - Ensure the player demonstrates normal flexibility, strength and absence of pain before returning.
5. Be familiar with emergency procedures in the arena, the location of a fracture board, stretcher, first aid kit, and telephone.
6. Take care of minor injuries quickly so they don't become major ones.
7. Check your players' equipment to see that it is appropriate, that it fits and that it is kept in good repair.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The following is a summary of the important points raised regarding each piece of equipment. It is the responsibility of every coach to ensure that each of his or her players is adequately protected and that parents are advised of the necessity to wear properly fitting and approved equipment.

1. Protective cup and pelvic protector
 - Equipment must completely cover and protect genitalia.
 - Purchase according to correct waist size.
2. Garter belt
 - Belt must be properly adjusted to hold up hockey socks.
 - Purchase according to correct waist size.
3. Shin pads
 - Pads must properly protect shin bone and knee cap.
 - The shin and knee cap should be made of hard plastic with suspension in the shin and extra padding in the knee.
 - The space between the knee cap and shin section must be flexible yet well protected.
 - When the knee cap is properly fitted over knee, the bottom of the pad must reach but not extend beyond the top of the skate.
4. Pants
 - Pants must protect the front and side of the thigh, tailbone, hip and kidney area. Unless they are properly fitted, they will not provide this protection.

5. Shoulder pads
 - Pads are constructed with hard caps for shoulder tips, plus flexible shock-absorbing material over the upper arms, chest and back.
 - It is advisable to have adjustable straps on the arms and body to ensure proper fit.
6. Elbow pads
 - Pads must cover the complete elbow joint with good shock-absorbing material.
 - When fastened properly, pads should extend from the shoulder pads to the gloves, and not be able to slip.
7. Helmet
 - Helmet must be HECC-approved.
 - If adjustable, it must fit properly and cover the forehead, temple and base of the skull.
 - Straps must be fastened.
 - Helmet is available in different sizes, and must not move around the head.
8. Face mask
 - Mask must be HECC-approved.
 - Masks are available in clear plastic and wire cage.
 - Mask must be securely fastened to the helmet so that it will not make contact with the face and rest properly in the “J” clips.
9. Gloves
 - Gloves must be well padded over the fingers, thumb and back of the hand, yet flexible to allow movement.
 - There should be hard fiber protection covered with shock-absorbing material over the wrist and forearm.
 - The glove must extend up the arm to the elbow pad.
 - Gloves must fit snugly, yet be large enough so that hand and wrist movement is not hindered.
10. Skates
 - Skates must provide good support and protection in the toe, heel and Achilles tendon areas.
 - Toe caps must be constructed of hard plastic.
 - The counter should also be constructed of plastic in order to provide long lasting support.
11. Stick
 - Stick must be of proper length and lie.
 - It should be taped on the blade and upper handle.
 - Ensure a proper shaft size for the player (should be smaller for younger players).

ON-ICE SAFETY

During ice sessions you have a responsibility as a coach to be prevention-minded about injuries. The following safety precautions should be observed:

1. Have players learn how to fall
2. Ensure that players stop at least 5-10 feet from the boards when performing drills or skills.
3. Ensure properly fitting protective equipment is worn at all times.
4. The coach must wear a HECC-certified helmet while on the ice.
5. Do not permit any “horse-play.”
6. Care should be taken to ensure that shooting drills are conducted in as safe a manner as possible.
7. Remove immediately any foreign materials on the ice.
8. Ensure all doors to the ice surface are closed prior to players starting any drills.
9. Do not use dangerous materials to divide up the ice surface, e.g. a bare rope stretched across the ice.

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

www.usahockey.com/safety