

COMMUNITY RUGBY: AN INTRODUCTION TO FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE PITCHSIDE PROVISION

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INTRODUCTION

Clubs and all organisers of rugby activities have a responsibility towards the health and safety of players, staff and volunteers. Measures should be in place to include at least training and first aid provision. Equipment should be in place to ensure that rugby union is delivered to the highest standards in a safe and enjoyable environment.

As set out in Regulation 9, a first aid specific risk assessment must be completed to ensure there is an appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover, and equipment provided for that rugby activity.

In respect of contact activity in the age grade game clubs, CBs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity must comply with the First Aid/Immediate care provision standards, Unless it is identified through the risk assessment that a different level of first aid provision is acceptable.

For the 2022-23 season, within the adult game the provision level remains as guidelines, with the intention to introduce them as standards in the 2023-24 season.

This document is part of the **RugbySafe Toolkits**, a series of digital resources designed to provide information and guidance on the different topics and programmes covering player welfare in rugby union.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS



To access the different toolkits please visit the **RugbySafe home page**.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This document provides information on the first aid and immediate care provision standards (FA/IC standards) for all age grade rugby and adult community rugby. They exclude the Premiership, Championship, Women's Premier 15s and BUCS Super Rugby teams, all of whom have competition specific provision FA/IC standards for immediate care and minimum medical standards.

The standards set out in this document are specific to the requirements for on-field / pitch-side rugby activity (training sessions and matches) only. Off-field first aid provision should be determined as part of a general risk assessment and will be appropriate to each club's requirements.

The standards set out in this document are the minimum FA/IC pitch-side provision required as part of Regulation 9 (Player Safety). They set out the first aid and immediate care provision for the recognition, assessment and immediate management of potential life and limb threatening injuries during organised training and matches only. All other medical support or provision such as therapist led prehabilitation and rehabilitation, strapping, soft tissue massage and the treatment of potential non-life and limb threatening and musculoskeletal injuries is outside the scope of this document. Any organisation and/or practitioner providing additional provision should be appropriately qualified and insured.

Clubs and other rugby activity providers with employees will likely fall under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1982 No 917) and will need to refer to these for minimum qualification/training standards.

GENERAL INFORMATION (CONT.)

Clubs and rugby activity providers should:

- > Ensure that all first aiders are appropriately trained and qualifications are up to date. Including a DBS check for first aiders who work regularly and/or unsupervised in age grade rugby.
- > Have a plan in place to ensure all pitch-side/venue medical requirements are met, including cover for if an Emergency First Aider (EFA) has to leave the pitch-side to deal with an injury.
- > Clubs and rugby activity providers should ensure that all appointed EFAs/ICPs are appropriately qualified and that all qualifications are kept up to date.
- > Clubs and rugby activity providers should provide first aiders the opportunity to share and discuss any concerns and the practicalities of providing first aid, along with regular refresher/informal training opportunities, to help keep first aid skills up to date.
- > Clubs and rugby activity providers should ensure have a process in place to ensure that all relevant personnel including first aiders complete the online HEADCASE concussion awareness module on an annual basis.

Clubs should have an individual (e.g. RugbySafe Lead) or small group of individuals who is responsible for the management of first aid provision and equipment in the club.

More information including a Club Rugby Safe Lead role descriptor is available on [RugbySafe home page](#).

- > Clubs should ensure the RugbySafe & Player Welfare section on the RFU Game Management System (GMS) is kept up to date, including number of first aiders, qualifications and equipment.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

To access the different toolkits please visit the [RugbySafe home page](#). For specific enquiries relating to FA/IC provision and other player welfare topics please contact the Club Support Centre, the RFU's online hub to help clubs access guidance and support easily and quickly.

REGULATION 9 (PLAYER SAFETY)

RFU Regulation 9 (Player Safety) states:

- 9.3** All clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity:
- a.** must complete a risk assessment and ensure there is an appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover, and equipment provided for that rugby activity as determined by such risk assessment.
 - b.** must have access to a telephone to ensure that the emergency services can be contacted immediately when needed and ensure there is clear vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle; and
 - c.** must comply with the RugbySafe First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Standards.

For the avoidance of doubt, Regulation 9.3(c) is a mandatory requirement where non-compliance will result in disciplinary action

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

To read the full version of Regulation 9 (Player Safety) go to the [RFU Regulations page](#).

RISK ASSESSMENT

Clubs and rugby activity providers must consider the FA/IC provision as part of a first aid specific risk assessment. This must be reviewed and updated annually and as appropriate.

The risk assessment must consider any specific individual club requirements, the type of activity, number of participants, facility and pitch locations etc. to determine if additional provision is required.

The risk assessment is particularly important for:

- > Matches or training which are simultaneously occurring on more than one site, whereby each site will require the appropriate level of cover.
- > Tournaments and festivals, where simultaneous matches are occurring on different pitches, there are large numbers of players and multiple matches and high levels of activity happening in a short period, e.g. back-to-back games in one day.
- > Age Grade Rugby Camps where there may be varying number of players across multiple age groups.

The RFU Risk Assessment Tool has been developed in conjunction with Howden, the RFU's brokers of Club liability insurance.

The **Risk Assessment Tool** provides an online, easy to use platform for clubs, whereby pre-set questions are answered to complete and review relevant risk assessments, including a first aid specific version.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information on risk assessments visit the free **Risk Assessment tool**.

INJURY REPORTING

Clubs and rugby activity providers should have a process for recording incidents and injuries that require first aid attention. Every first aider should be made aware of the process/ have access to ensure all applicable incidents /injuries are recorded appropriately. The process must be GDPR compliant, with all records stored appropriately and securely.

The RFU have collaborated with Howden and Proactive to provide an affordable incident report app that provides a quick and efficient system to ensure injuries and incidents both on and off the pitch are recorded and maintained in a secure and appropriate manner. Visit the **Rugby Proactive App** [here](#).

Clubs and rugby activity providers need to be aware of what injuries should be reported to the RFU. It is crucial that all reportable injury events are submitted to the RFU in order for the appropriate support to be put in place. Reportable injury events are defined as:

- > An injury which results in the player being admitted to a hospital (this does not include those that attend an Accident or Emergency Department and are allowed home from there).
- > Deaths which occur during or within six hours of a game finishing.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS



Visit the **RugbySafe Injury Reporting & Incident Recording Toolkit** for more information

MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (MEAP)

Clubs and rugby activity providers should have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) in place to identify needs and protocols in an emergency situation.

The MEAP should include ensuring Ambulance access is available and access points are kept free of parked vehicles or other obstruction at all times.

The MEAP should be shared with all relevant individuals such as coaches and team managers.



USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

More information on the MEAP including a template is available in the **RugbySafe Essential Guides, Forms and Templates Toolkit**.

FIRST AID / IMMEDIATE CARE EQUIPMENT

Clubs and rugby activity providers should:

- > Have a match-day centrally dedicated first aid contact point that is easily recognisable and accessible e.g. first aid room or gazebo/tent.
- > Provide each EFA with a fully stocked first aid kit, as well as a separate club/central fully stocked first aid/immediate care kit.
- > Consider the need and practicalities of an allocated first aid room that is set up/used specifically for FA/IC treatment.
- > Consider the need and practicalities for any other additional equipment e.g. Automated External Defibrillator(s) (AED) and where appropriate have a process in place for the storage, usage and maintenance as appropriate.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS



More information on first aid equipment is available in the **RugbySafe Essential Guides, Forms and Templates Toolkit**.



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