



Concussion Laws

What is a concussion?

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “a concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells.” CDC – [HEADS UP to Brain Injury Awareness](#)

Overview

The state’s concussion laws require school coaches to receive training on concussions and follow certain protocols when an athlete receives a head injury, including removing the student from athletic activities until he or she receives medical clearance. It also requires (1) schools to receive informed consent from parents or guardians before allowing student athletes to participate in sports and (2) youth athletic activity operators (e.g. municipalities) to make available to youth athletes and their parents or guardians information on concussions.

School Athletics

The law requires school coaches to complete concussion training and refresher courses developed or approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) in consultation with the public health commissioner and other entities. SBE may revoke a coach’s permit for failure to comply with this requirement.

It also requires school boards to prohibit student athletes from participating in intramural or interscholastic athletic activities unless the student and his or her parent or guardian read written materials, view online training or videos, or attend an in-person training on concussions. The law also requires schools to (1) provide each participating student athlete’s parent or guardian with an informed consent form that includes information about concussions and (2) obtain the parent’s or guardian’s signature acknowledging receipt of the form and consenting to the student’s participation ([CGS § 10-149b](#)).

The law requires a school coach to immediately remove a student athlete from an athletic activity if the athlete exhibits signs or symptoms of, or is diagnosed with, a concussion. The school must notify the athlete's parent or guardian within 24 hours of removing the athlete from the activity. The law prohibits the coach from allowing the athlete to participate in team activities involving physical exertion until the athlete receives written clearance from a qualifying health professional. After the athlete receives written clearance, the law prohibits a coach from allowing him or her to participate without restriction until he or she no longer exhibits symptoms of a concussion and receives written clearance for full, unrestricted activity from such a health professional. The law allows SBE to revoke a coach's permit for failure to comply with these laws ([CGS § 10-149c](#)).

The law requires SBE to (1) require school boards to annually collect and report all concussion occurrences and (2) annually send a compilation of this information to DPH, who in turn must report to the legislature ([CGS § 10-149e](#)).

Youth Athletic Activities

The law requires youth athletic activity operators (e.g., municipalities) to make available a written or electronic statement on concussions to each youth athlete and the youth's parent or guardian. It exempts the operator and his or her designees from civil liability for failing to make available the statement.

By law, a "youth athletic activity" is an organized athletic activity involving participants between ages seven and 19 who:

1. either (a) engage in, or practice or prepare for, an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity or (b) attend an organized athletic camp or clinic intended to train, instruct, or prepare participants to engage in organized athletics and
2. either (a) pay a fee to participate or (b) have a municipality, business, or nonprofit organization sponsor their participation or cost ([CGS § 21a-432](#)).

Legislative History

In 2010, the legislature passed the first of the state's concussion laws. Among other things, the act required (1) public school coaches to be periodically trained in how to recognize and respond to head injuries and concussions, (2) the coaches to take a student out of a game or practice if he or she shows signs of, or are diagnosed with, a concussion, and (3) SBE, with certain other entities, to develop or approve a concussion education course ([PA 10-62](#)).

Legislation passed in 2014 (1) required SBE to develop a concussion education plan and informed consent form and (2) prohibited student athletes from participating in intramural or interscholastic athletic activities unless they and their parents or guardians were trained on the education plan. Among other things, it also required (1) schools to provide the informed consent form to student athletes' parents or guardians and get their signatures authorizing the athlete's participation in the activity and (2) coaches or other qualified school employees to notify a student athlete's parent or guardian when the student is removed from play for a concussion ([PA 14-66](#)).

In 2015, the legislature passed a law requiring youth athletic activity operators to make available a statement on concussions to youth athletes and their parents or guardians ([PA 15-5, JSS, § 114](#)).

**Learn
More**

State Department of Education, [Concussion Education Plan and Guidelines for Connecticut Schools](#), 2015.

CDC, [HEADS UP to Brain Injury Awareness](#).

Task Force on Youth Concussions, [Final Report](#), 2015.

