



EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS CAMPAIGN

Our goal with this collaboration between the four groups is to heighten awareness around emergency action plans (EAPs) in our school communities. We are looking to provide resources and best practice recommendations to school personnel on implementing venue specific EAPs.

ARTICLE #1

INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENCY PLANNING & EAPs

Importance of being Proactive

Those of us working in athletics know the importance of preparation. We spend hours developing practice and game plans. We work tirelessly to perfect performance all in an effort to help our students excel in their sport or activity and in life. This pursuit of perfection takes time and commitment from all involved – but it doesn't end with competitions.

The one event we don't want to ever encounter is a life-threatening situation involving one of our student-athletes. Unfortunately, these emergency events occur and are devastating to friends and family, the school, and the community. Just as we prepare for athletic competitions, we need to commit the time and energy to prepare for athletic related emergencies.

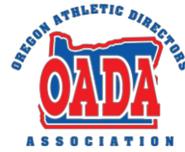
While we always know when the next game is scheduled, we never know when a medical emergency is going to occur - and it may not be an athlete. It could be an official, a coach, or YOU! Quite frankly, it may never happen, but you have to prepare like it will because a lack of preparation for the emergency may lead to the loss of a life.

All of us involved in athletics – athletic directors, coaches, and athletic trainers - have a duty to provide the best possible care to the injured individual. The responsibility shouldn't fall on one individual. We need to work collaboratively to ensure we have the best possible response. To aid in this, the OSAA, OACA, OADA, and OATS, are partnering to help schools prepare for emergencies by providing resources to athletics personnel on implementing emergency action plans (EAPs) based on best practice recommendations.

Campaign Goals

This campaign is designed to help schools develop and implement EAPs if that initial step hasn't been taken. For schools that already have EAPs, the campaign is an opportunity to review and update the EAPs to ensure they meet best practice recommendations.

As of 2016, the OSAA requires that schools "...have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place for responding to life-threatening emergencies in after-school practices and events."¹ The NFHS believes that "An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) with clearly defined written and practiced protocols should be developed and in place at every high school."² Despite these calls many schools do not have EAPs that are ready to be used in an emergency.



This campaign will be based around the idea that EAPs should be *comprehensive, practical, and adaptable to any emergency situation*.³ The EAP doesn't need to be a lengthy document. It needs to be thorough enough to guide the first responder – whether it is a coach, an athletic trainer, or a teammate – on what to do no matter the emergency. However, it shouldn't be so detailed that the responder doesn't act because of information overload.

Some individuals confuse the actual EAP with the policies and procedures that support the EAP. It very well may be the case that the athletic department's or the athletic training department's policy and procedure manual has a section about emergencies and emergency planning. This manual could have policies on how emergency equipment is maintained or the phone tree of who needs to be contacted when a student-athlete is transported to the hospital. While those are important components they probably don't belong in the actual EAP.

One of our first suggestions for effective EAPs is to advocate that all athletic venues need their own EAP. Just like every sport has its unique demands, every venue does as well. One venue may have quick access to certain equipment while another doesn't. An ambulance may be able to easily enter one venue but not another. While it may take more time initially develop an EAP for each venue, it will make a difference if the EAP has to be activated.

Components of an EAP

Once the school decides to implement EAPs for all venues, the actual components of the EAP need to be developed. Specifically, each EAP should detail the following:

- Emergency personnel
- Emergency communication plan
- Emergency equipment
- Venue directions and emergency transport

In subsequent articles we will provide advice on developing each component of the EAP, along with tips for making the EAP practical to use. We believe that utilizing information from each article of this campaign will help you develop an EAP template that works for your school. By working collaboratively, we can make the process for preparing emergencies less burdensome and ultimately make participation in athletics safer.

Do you have feedback or questions about emergency planning?

Do you have questions about emergency action planning at your school? Do you have feedback on this campaign? Do you have examples of what has worked at your school that we can share in this campaign? Do you have specific challenges that you need help with? Please complete this [short online form](#).

References:

1. [OSAA Board Policy – Emergency Action Plan](#)
2. [NFHS Recommendations and Guidelines for Minimizing Head Impact Exposure and Concussion Risk in Football](#)
3. [National Athletic Trainers' Association: Emergency Planning in Athletics](#)