



# UNIVERSITIES REG. 9 GUIDANCE

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# INTRODUCTION

Universities 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.

Regulation 9 applies to **ALL rugby union activity**, not just the university representative club sides (i.e., intra-mural, touch).

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.

## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS



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.

# 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 (FA) and Immediate Care (IC) Provision Standards**.

For the avoidance of doubt, Regulation 9.3(c) is a mandatory requirement and incidents with inadequate first aid provision will be investigated.

# RISK ASSESSMENT

Universities must consider the FA/IC provision as part of a rugby specific risk assessment. You must indicate, via a tick box within the SRFU affiliation process, that a rugby specific risk assessment has been undertaken, and would be available upon request from the RFU/SRFU.

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 occur 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.

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

The **RFU 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. This is available for universities to use if they would like but is not mandatory if you have your own processes in place. Alternatively, you may use your existing institutional specific risk assessment - the important thing is that students and staff are all familiar with its contents.



## **USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS**



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

# INJURY REPORTING

Universities 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. The app is available for universities to trial for free, by contacting [universities@rfu.com](mailto:universities@rfu.com). You can visit the [Rugby Proactive App](#) here.



Universities 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 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, which is not reportable but should be recorded by the university in their usual manner).
- Deaths which occur during or within six hours of a game finishing.



# ADULT RUGBY PITCHSIDE FIRST AID IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION (TRAINING & MATCHES)

Universities may be subject to different provision requirements as set out by BUCS regulations, which they must comply with if the level of provision is higher than that specified in this guide. For tournaments and other multi-match events, please refer to the Tournaments, Festivals and Multi-match events section.

Future guidance will be made available regarding overseas tours.



## MINIMUM GUIDELINES

### TRAINING SESSIONS

- 1 x Emergency First Aider per training group is based on a ratio of 1 first aider to 40 players.
- For larger groups additional Emergency First Aider (s) may be required and should be considered as part of the first aid risk assessment.
- For smaller groups it may be appropriate for 1 Emergency First Aider to cover more than 1 training group e.g. One Emergency First Aider covers two adult team/s training session where there is a total of 40 or fewer players training. This should be considered as part of the first aid risk assessment.

### MATCHES - ADULT MEN

- National Leagues: 1 x Immediate Care Practitioner per team\*\*
- Regional & County Leagues and Lower XVs: 1 x Emergency First Aider per match.

\*\* The standards including Immediate Care Practitioner provision and medical equipment requirements are set by the **National Rugby League**.

## MATCHES – ADULT WOMEN

- Championship and below: 1 x Emergency First Aider per match.

## BEST PRACTICE

One first aider per team provides a safer experience for the players and reduces the risk of stoppages in play and disruptions due to having one first aider per match.

**Best Practice** would be considered as the following:

- An individual not involved in the training or match pitchside to monitor for potential injuries
- Away teams travelling to fixtures with designated first aider.

**Minimum standard** would be considered as the following:

- A player, coach or referee who is first aid qualified at the session (per team), or facility staff on site who participants can access in the event of an incident.
- Away team covered by home team first aid provision. Communication between clubs/ teams is encouraged to ensure cover is in place.

**When the provision is a first aider per match, the home club/team is responsible for providing the Emergency First Aid (EFA) Cover.**

If the minimum guidelines are not in place, those involved in arranging the activity must complete a live first aid risk assessment and be satisfied that it is safe for the activity to go ahead.

If you wish to report concerns having attended a venue, you can email [universities@rfu.com](mailto:universities@rfu.com).

\* A 'live risk assessment' is the practice of observing, assessing, identifying and (where removing/reducing risk in the current environment (e.g., playing area, number of people, facilities, provision etc.).



# ADULT RUGBY PITCHSIDE FIRST AID PROVISION OVERVIEW

For training sessions, 1 EFA per team is based on a ratio of 1 first aider to 40 players. For smaller groups it may be appropriate for 1 Emergency First Aider to cover more than 1 training group e.g. One Emergency First Aider covers two adult team/s training sessions where there is a total of 40 or fewer players training.

	MINIMUM STANDARD		BEST PRACTICE
MEN	TRAINING	MATCHES	MATCHES
BSR	1 Emergency First Aider per team	Level 2 Immediate Care Practitioner per team	See BUCS regulations
Men's BUCS Tier 1	1 Emergency First Aider per team/training	1 Emergency First Aider per match	1 Emergency First Aider per team
Men's BUCS Tier 2 & Below	1 Emergency First Aider per team/training squad	1 Emergency First Aider per match	1 Emergency First Aider per team
Non-BUCS, Intramural (IMS) NAMS, Local league, merit table etc.	1 Emergency First Aider per team/training squad	1 Emergency First Aider per match	1 Emergency First Aider per team
WOMEN	TRAINING	MATCHES	MATCHES
BUCS Women's national league	1 Emergency First Aider per team/training squad	1 Emergency First Aider per match	1 Emergency First Aider per team
Women's BUCS Tier 1 & below including non-BUCS (IMS & league)	1 Emergency First Aider per team/training squad	1 Emergency First Aider per match	1 Emergency First Aider per team

## TOURNAMENTS AND FESTIVALS

Where there are multiple teams playing at the same time (e.g., festivals and tournaments) a first aid risk assessment is required to determine the number and type of provision. The organiser should consider the levels of potential additional medical cover that may be required depending on the size of the event e.g., Ambulance/ Paramedic and/or Advanced Immediate Care Practitioner (Doctor) on site.

The organiser is responsible for determining and organising appropriate venue Emergency First Aider provision as part of the event first aid risk assessment (e.g., requiring that every team brings a first aider and/or organising for specific event first aid/immediate care provision). A designated central first aid tent/area should be considered as part of the event first aid risk assessment.

Please note that these standards do not account for any medical provision for crowds and spectators at an event or festival, this medical provision should be considered separately to the FA cover provision above.





## MINIMUM GUIDELINES

### NON-CONTACT

- Non-Contact Formats e.g., Touch/Tag events (including Adult, Mixed and Age Grade): Emergency First Aider per 2 matches or 1 full size pitch + 1 Emergency First Aider per venue.

### CONTACT RUGBY

(E.G., 15 A SIDE, 10S, 7S AND XRUGBY)

- Adult Men & Women 1x Emergency First Aider per Match + 1 x Emergency First Aider per venue.

## BEST PRACTICE

One first aider per team and an immediate care practitioner will provide a safer experience and reduce the risk of stoppages in play. The event organiser is responsible for first aid provision and ensuring there is allocated cover for each match.

If the minimum guidelines are not in place, the host involved in arranging the activity must complete a live first aid risk assessment\* and be satisfied that it is safe for the rugby activity to go ahead.

\* A 'live risk assessment' is the practice of observing, assessing, identifying and (where removing/reducing risk in the current environment (e.g., playing area, number of people, facilities, provision etc.).

## TOURNAMENTS AND FESTIVALS PITCHSIDE FIRST AID PROVISION OVERVIEW

Organisers of tournaments and festivals are responsible for undertaking a risk assessment to determine the level of provision.

	MINIMUM GUIDELINES	BEST PRACTICE
	<b>ADULT</b>	
Tag, touch & non-contact	1 Emergency First Aider per 2 matches / 1 full pitch	1 Emergency First Aider per team
	MINIMUM GUIDELINES	BEST PRACTICE
Contact	1 Emergency First Aider per match	1 Emergency First Aider per team

## MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (MEAP)

Universities 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

Universities 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.



## HEADCASE CONCUSSION AWARENESS

Clubs and universities should ensure that all coaches, match officials, and players are aware of the **RFU's HEADCASE concussion guidelines**.

The **HEADCASE module** is a free online training module that takes approx. 30 minutes to complete and provides some key information on what to look out for and how to manage a potential concussion.

Any player with a suspected concussion must be removed from play immediately and not return to the game. **“If in doubt, sit them out.”** They must then undertake a minimum rest period as stated and follow the appropriate Return to Play Programme. Institutions may wish to consider internal reporting processes to support students with suspected concussions and any impact on their academic studies.

This must be adhered to irrespective of the qualification/profession of the individual providing the pitch-side first aid and/or immediate care provision.

### **REMEMBER:**

**There is NO Head Injury Assessment (HIA) process in the community game. This includes all age grade and adult games and competitions.**

### **USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS**

More information, including the concussion management guidelines, resources and the online awareness modules is available on the **HEADCASE** webpage.



## RECOGNISE & REMOVE

A PLAYER SHOULD STOP PLAYING/TRAINING AND NOT RETURN IF:	
ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT:	THEY HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING OBSERVABLE SIGNS:
Headache	Loss of consciousness
Seizure or convulsion	Loss of responsiveness
Dizziness or balance problems	Slow to get up
Confusion	Unsteady on feet
Difficulty concentrating	Incoordination
Nausea or vomiting	Clutching of head
Drowsiness / fatigue	Blank or vacant look
More emotional or sadness	Dazed/ Confused
Blurred vision, sensitivity to light	
Irritable	
Difficulty remembering or amnesia	
Neck Pain	
“Don’t feel right”	

# CRISP (COMMUNITY RUGBY INJURY SURVEILLANCE AND PREVENTION)

Run in conjunction with the University of Bath, the Community Rugby Injury Surveillance and Prevention (CRISP) Project collects injury data from across the community game.

The CRISP Project is critical to gaining better understanding and providing data to compare and assess trends in injury risk across different playing populations and levels of the game.

This allows the RFU to better inform injury prevention strategies, such as law/rule changes, so that the safety of the game is improved for those participating.

With the tackle height law changes being introduced in the 2023/24 season, having teams from across different playing populations involved in the CRISP Project is even more important.

In order for the CRISP Project to be a success, we need clubs and teams to get involved. By being involved in the project, your club can help improve the safety of the game and improve the welfare of players.

We are looking for university male and female teams to get involved and contribute to this important research.

## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

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For more information please visit the [RugbySafe Research Toolkit](#) or use the QR code on p.14.



# INJURY DATA WANTED!

## COMMUNITY RUGBY INJURY SURVEILLANCE AND PREVENTION PROJECT (CRISP): 2023-2024



The CRISP Project team is hungry for injury data to help us develop our understanding of injuries across all levels of the English community game.

We seek data from the following teams:

- Men's Community - National, Regional & Counties Levels
- Women's Community - Championship & National Challenge Levels
- DPP & Club Age Grade Girls
- Club Age Grade Boys
- Schoolboy

Submitting your injury data helps us to improve player safety.

It allows us to understand the:

- ✓ Impact of the lowered tackle height for 2023/24 on injuries
- ✓ Differences in injuries across age groups
- ✓ Differences between the men and the women's game



**LEARN MORE.  
REGISTER YOUR TEAM.  
SUBMIT YOUR DATA.**



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