



Organizer Health and Safety Requirements:

Managing a Safe Ultimate Event



USA Ultimate Organizer Health and Safety Requirements: Managing a Safe Ultimate Event

The content within the Health and Safety Packet has been compiled and reviewed by USA Ultimate staff and the USA Ultimate Medical Advisory Committee. Our goal is to help athletes, coaches, event staff, and spectators enjoy a safe experience and perform at their best both on and off the field. For any USA Ultimate event or sanctioned event, we ask team organizers, event organizers and tournament directors to share this packet with all participants and to have a copy available at the event. For additional information you may find the complete [Health, Safety and Liability Requirements](#) on our website.

Event organizers and tournament directors for all USA Ultimate official and sanctioned events have agreed to abide by the USAU Health & Safety Requirements. Use this document as a guideline to assure compliance with USA Ultimate Health and Safety Requirements.

Questions? Contact USA Ultimate

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Sideline Safety

- ☐ Players and spectators should make every effort to keep objects, including but not limited to bags, strollers, chairs, coolers and tents, as far away from the playing field as possible. Spectators and equipment are required to stay at least 3 yards (5 yards is recommended) from the field. If there are restraining lines or ropes, spectators and all equipment should remain behind them.
- ☐ If a player feels that an object on the sideline is not safe, s/he should inform Event Staff and should refrain from playing until s/he is satisfied that safe conditions have been established.
- ☐ Event Staff reserve the right to move or remove objects or spectators from on or near the playing field if those conditions are, in the opinion of the Event Staff, unsafe for players, staff, or spectators.

Emergency Medical and Safety Plan

- An Emergency Medical and Safety Plan specific to each event should be determined by the event organizer, communicated to team captains prior to the event, and made available for reference on site at the event's designated medical area. See template at end of this document.
 - Complete the [template provided online](#) or within this document.
 - Must keep copy at designated medic area at event site and communicate the information in the plan to teams prior to the event

Medical Area Requirements

- For any field site with more than 1 playing field, a set medical area must be designated for the duration of the event

Hospitalization Policy

- If, during a USA Ultimate event, an athlete receives care at a hospital, medical clinic, or doctor's office, or is referred to a hospital/doctor by event medical staff, the athlete is barred from further competition in that event until s/he provides a doctor's note, on letterhead or prescription pad, to event medical staff stating that the athlete is authorized to return to competition.

Medical Staff Requirements

Event Size (# of people including spectators)	Normal Conditions (Heat Index <90F)	Heat Caution (Heat Index ≥90F and <100F)**	Participant Age women>55, men>50	Time for ambulance to arrive >15mins
< 50	A	B	C	C
50 - 250	B	B	D	D
250-500	D	D	D and AED	D and AED
501-999	1ATC	1ATC	1ATC and AED	1ATC and AED
1000-1999	2ATC* and AED	2ATC* and AED	EMT, 2ATC* and AED	EMT, 2ATC* and AED
≥2000	3ATC* and AED	EMT, 3ATC* and AED	EMT, 3ATC* and AED	EMT, 3ATC* and AED

*If majority of people are spectators, 2ATC can be replaced by D and 1ATC; 3ATC can be replaced by 2D and 1ATC.

**When Heat Index gets to 100F, play must be suspended until heat index falls below 100F.

Medical Contact (MC) must be 25 or older, must know how to get to the nearest hospital and must be able to call 911 immediately if needed. MC should provide the [insurance claim form](#) to injured participants, but questions related to what is covered by the policy need to be directed to the insurance company (not address by the MC).

Key:

A = MC is on-site participant

B = MC is on-site non-participant

C = MC is on-site participant with basic first aid knowledge and CPR training

D = MC is on-site non-participant with basic first aid knowledge and CPR training

ATC = Certified Athletic Trainer

AED = An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is present at the tournament site

EMT = Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic on-site

Note: If using satellite field sites, you must meet the above requirements for each satellite field site (more than 5 minutes away). For example: If there are 500 players at one field site and 50 on another (that is more than 5 minutes away) then the first field site must at least meet the 250-500 event size requirements and the second field site must meet 50-250 event size requirements for my small field site.

Health and Safety Tips for Athletes

A link to the [USA Ultimate Athlete Health and Safety Packet](#) will be distributed to team members by USA Ultimate prior to the event.

Weather and Wind Policies

- Complete the [Inclement Weather Plan](#) Template online or in this document and share the plan with team contacts. In the event that changes need to be made to the competition format or schedule, the Formats Committee and Formats Manual are available as resources. (Note: Changes to Championship Series events must be approved by the appropriate USA Ultimate coordinator.) Also understand the [Wind Policy](#).

Lightning Policy

- Adapted from the 2014-2015 NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook Lightning Safety Guidelines <http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/MD15.pdf>

Lightning can be a significant threat to the safety of participants in outdoor athletic events like ultimate. The odds of being struck by lightning are significantly reduced when proper safety precautions are taken. The following preventative steps should be taken by USA Ultimate event coordinators in an effort to maintain the safety of participants and spectators.

- 1) Establish a chain of command to determine who is watching for a potential lightning threat, who makes the call to stop play and send individuals to safety.
- 2) Establish a means by which a lightning safety decisions and procedures will be communicated effectively to participants and spectators. Communicate that plan in advance to participants and spectators so that they will quickly recognize that you are communicating a lightning delay. Also communicate how they can get status updates during the delay. Twitter and GroupMe have proved effective for updates during the delay.
- 3) Establish a means to monitor local weather conditions and weather advisories/warnings both prior to and during the event. If there is a significant chance that lightning may impact your event, take the extra steps to be able to actively monitor the weather while on site with internet connected computers or other applications that can show weather radar and the proximity of lightning strikes.
- 4) Be aware of and be able to communicate to participants and spectators the location of the closest safe shelter. Safe Shelter includes the following:
 - A) First choice: Any frequently used building with electrical wiring and plumbing facilities which will help to ground the structure. Shower facilities should be avoided. Showers and other plumbing facilities should not be used during a storm event. Determine in advance if these buildings will be unlocked and available as lightning shelters during your event.
 - B) Second choice: Any fully enclosed vehicle with a hard top and close windows. It is not the rubber tires that protect the occupants from a lightning strike, but the hard metal framework which dissipates the electric charge around the vehicle. It is important to not touch the sides of the vehicle. For teams that have hired buses to transport them, advise them to inform the bus drivers to be accessible should you determine that shelter should be sought.
- 5) If you can't get to a safe shelter, try to avoid being the tallest object in an open field or on open water. Avoid other tall objects, metal objects, and water. Assume a crouch position with only the balls of your feet touching the ground, your arms wrapped around your knees, and your head lowered. Minimize contact with the ground. Do not lie flat.
- 6) Avoid using telephone land lines. Cell phones are safe provided the person has followed other safety guidelines.
- 7) **Determining when you need to suspend activity and send people to shelter: if you hear thunder OR your computer or app shows that lightning has struck within ten miles, suspend activity. If you do not have access to a computer or app that shows the proximity of lightning strikes, suspend play if lightning is seen even if you cannot hear thunder.**

- 8) Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or strike within ten miles (or flash of lightning if not using a detection app), before bringing captains/coaches together to determine how play at your event will continue. Before convening that meeting, have thought through other aspects of your event since you may now need to continue beyond the scheduled time. Such aspects should include medical staff, volunteer staff, any catering or other scheduled activities and whether or not they can be rescheduled, etc.
- 9) Teams choosing to seek shelter from lightning before you communicate that play should be suspended due to lightning should not be penalized for taking such action. Their game should be considered suspended from the point in which it was stopped.
- 10) If someone is struck by lightning, observe the following procedures:
 - 1) Survey the scene for safety
 - 2) Call 911
 - 3) Lightning victims are safe to touch. They do not carry a charge.
 - 4) If necessary, move victim carefully to a safer location
 - 5) Evaluate airway, breathing and circulation. Begin CPR if necessary.
 - 6) Evaluate and treat for hypothermia, shock, fractures, and/or burns.

Extreme Heat and Cold

- ☐ Refer to [Medical Staff Requirements](#) above. When the Heat Index reaches 100F ([see NOAA/National Weather Service Heat Index Chart](#)), play must be suspended. In colder temperatures and/or wetter conditions, it is important to be cognizant of conditions conducive to hypothermia. Organizers should consult with event medical staff, discuss the situation with team captains, and be willing to adjust the schedule or delay/cancel games to ensure player safety.

Nutrition

Refer to the [USA Ultimate Athlete Health and Safety Packet](#) for some basic nutrition information.

Alcohol Policy

- ☐ USA Ultimate does not condone the unlawful or unauthorized use, possession, distribution, consumption, promotion, marketing, or sale of alcoholic beverages at USA Ultimate official, sponsored, or sanctioned events. Alcohol shall not be marketed, provided, served or sold at USA Ultimate official, sponsored, sanctioned or affiliated youth events (when all participants are under 21).
- ☐ USA Ultimate members, players, organizers or representatives of the organization, must not compete at USA Ultimate official, sponsored, sanctioned or affiliated events, or carry out responsibilities related to official organization and event business, while under the influence of alcohol or illegal/banned drugs. Additionally, these individuals must not engage in the unlawful or unauthorized use, possession, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal/banned drugs at said events or while representing USA Ultimate in an official capacity.
- ☐ NOTE: USA Ultimate liability insurance for your event does not include alcohol liability.

Minors: Requirements Specific to Youth Participants

There are [additional requirements](#) for events with youth participants (under 18).

☐ Chaperones

For all USA Ultimate events, one USA Ultimate approved chaperone is required for each team with a player under the age of 18 ([Some USAU events may require more than one approved chaperone](#)). The chaperone must be listed on the team roster. An approved chaperone is an individual who:

- a) has a USA Ultimate account (no membership required);
- b) has completed a USAU liability waiver;
- c) is 21 or older; and
- d) has completed a background screening through the National Center for Safety Initiatives and received a "green light" (This process takes 2-10 days and is good for two years.).

☐ Medical Authorization Form

A [Medical Authorization form](#) is required for all players under 18 and must be given to the team chaperone. The team chaperone should keep the form on site with them throughout the event in case of an emergency (please note that medical authorization forms are not submitted to USA Ultimate).

☐ Alcohol Policy at Youth Events

Alcohol shall not be marketed, provided, served or sold at USA Ultimate official, sponsored, sanctioned or affiliated youth events (events where all of the participants are under 21).

☐ Competition Requirements

For youth events, the following schedule parameters are mandatory:

- Max 3 games/day and 6 max on the weekend when using full length (2 hour, games to 15);
- Option to have more games within the 6 hour (per day) max game time (if # of teams/competition necessitates);
- Minimum of 30 minutes from hard cap to start of next round;
- If teams have more than 2 games in a day, one 1-hour break between games is recommended.

For non-youth events with youth players- while the above schedule parameters are not required, please consider youth participants when creating the event schedule. Keep safety a priority. When minors are permitted to play with adults, consider:

- appropriate SKILL LEVEL
- adequate BODY SIZE
- LANGUAGE
- presence of ALCOHOL
- age-appropriate SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

General Liability Insurance

USA Ultimate sanctioned, sponsored and series events receive full coverage under our [general liability policy](#). USA Ultimate insurance covers ultimate and ultimate-related activities only. Questions about what is covered should be directed to USA Ultimate or the insurance company (not TDs or event medical staff).

Concussion Safety & Awareness

☐ Education

- USA Ultimate recommends the CDC "[Heads Up Safety](#)" program, a free one-hour online training.
- USA Ultimate's [Release and Liability Waiver](#) includes important information from the CDC regarding concussion safety. The information is also included below.

☐ Coaching Requirements

- Coaches at USA Ultimate events are required to have completed a concussion awareness and safety recognition program (like the CDC program above or other local or state-recommended course). *Coaches should not submit records of course completion to USA Ultimate, but should maintain records on-site while coaching.*

☐ Removal & Return to Play

All guidelines identified by the CDC must be strictly followed in the event of a suspected concussion:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure athlete is evaluated by a health care professional trained in concussion diagnosis and management.
3. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
4. If a minor, inform athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
5. Allow athlete to return to play only with permission from an appropriate health care professional.

☐ From the [CDC Parent/Athlete Concussion Information Sheet](#):

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump can be serious.

Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If an athlete reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, s/he should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

Concussion Danger Signs: In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs: •One pupil larger than the other •Is drowsy or cannot be awakened •A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse •Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination •Repeated vomiting or nausea •Loses consciousness (even if brief) •Cannot recognize people or places •Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated •Has unusual behavior •Convulsions or seizures •Slurred Speech

Why should an athlete report their symptoms? If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete's brain is still healing, s/he is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.

What should you do if you think your athlete has a concussion? If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, remove the athlete from play and seek medical attention. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

Rest is key to helping an athlete recover from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional. It's better to miss one game than the whole season. Find more information on [concussions online](#).

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athletes

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems or confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

Did You Know?

- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
 - Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion
 - Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults
- Remember...Concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

Event Medical & Inclement Weather Plan Template

Use this form as a guide to creating your Event Medical Plan. Please see the [Health, Safety, and Liability Guidelines](#) for details regarding event-specific requirements. Event Managers of USA Ultimate events are required to communicate the following plan to team contacts prior to the event and have a copy available on site at the medical area.

*You will receive a google doc link to this plan if you are organizing a USAU sanctioned tournament.

Medical and Inclement Weather Plan

Event Managers are required to communicate the following plan to team contacts prior to the event and have a copy available on site at the medical area.

Resources: [Health, Safety and Liability Guidelines](#) & [TD Manual](#)

Nearest Hospital

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Map Link:



Medical Services provided at tournament

Where will the medical staff be at the event

How can teams contact the medical staff (phone, radio)

How will event staff communicate weather, emergency & schedule changes to teams

Any other relevant information specific to your tournament, if applicable (Facility specific weather policies)



USA Ultimate Weather Policy (Facility may have their own policy)

You can find more details and information here: [Health, safety, and liability Requirements](#)

For Lightning:

If you hear thunder OR your computer or app shows that lightning has struck within ten miles, suspend activity. If you do not have access to a computer or app that shows the proximity of lightning strikes, suspend play if lightning is seen even if you cannot hear thunder.

For Extreme Heat and Cold:

Refer to [Medical Staff Requirements](#). When the Heat Index reaches 100 F ([see NOAA/National Weather Service Heat Index Chart](#)), play must be suspended. In colder temperatures and/or wetter conditions, it is important to be cognizant of conditions conducive to hypothermia