

Burlington United FC: Health and Safety Policy

Effective Date: 12/3/2025

1. Policy Statement

Burlington United FC ("The Club") is committed to providing a safe, enjoyable, and positive environment for all players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators. The health and safety of our youth players is our absolute priority. We strive to minimize risks through proactive protocols, education, and strictly enforced standards.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Club

- Ensure all coaches and staff undergo background checks and safety training.
- Maintain safe facilities and inspect equipment regularly.
- Provide clear reporting channels for safety concerns.

Coaches and Staff

- Carry a fully stocked First Aid Kit and Emergency Contact information to every session/game.
- Inspect the field and equipment (especially goal posts) prior to every usage.
- Adhere strictly to the "Return to Play" protocols regarding injuries.
- Never leave a child unattended after practice; wait until all players are picked up.

Parents/Guardians

- Complete the **Medical Release Form** and disclose any health conditions (asthma, allergies, etc.) to the coach.
- Ensure players arrive with proper equipment (shin guards, cleats, water).
- Inform the coach immediately if a player is unwell or recovering from an injury.

Players

- Wear shin guards and proper footwear at all times.
- Remove all jewelry (including earrings, necklaces, and watches) before play.
- Report any injury or discomfort to the coach immediately.

3. Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the following steps must be taken immediately:

1. **Assess the Situation:** Ensure the area is safe (e.g., stop play). Do not move the injured player if a head, neck, or spinal injury is suspected.
2. **Call 911:** If the injury is serious (unconsciousness, difficulty breathing, severe bleeding, broken bone).
3. **Provide Aid:** Administer First Aid/CPR only within the scope of your training.
4. **Notify:** Contact the parent/guardian immediately if they are not present.
5. **Report:** Complete an **Incident Report Form** within 24 hours and submit it to the Club Safety Officer.

4. Concussion Protocol ("Head's Up")

Burlington United FC strictly follows a "When in doubt, sit them out" policy.

- **Suspected Concussion:** Any player who sustains a significant blow to the head or body, or shows signs of concussion (dizziness, nausea, confusion, headache), must be removed from play immediately.
- **No Return Same Day:** The player is **not permitted** to return to play or practice on the same day.
- **Medical Clearance:** The player may only return to team activities after submitting a written clearance from a licensed healthcare professional.

5. Environmental Safety

Lightning Policy (30/30 Rule)

- If thunder is heard or lightning is seen, play must be suspended immediately.
- All individuals must seek shelter in a substantial building or a hard-topped vehicle.
- Play cannot resume until **30 minutes** have passed since the last thunder was heard or lightning seen.

Heat Guidelines

- Coaches must modify practice intensity and increase water breaks based on the Heat Index.
- **Heat Index > 105°F:** All outdoor activities are cancelled.

- **Heat Index 95°F–104°F:** Mandatory water breaks every 15 minutes; maximum 1 hour practice.
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6. Equipment and Facility Safety

Goal Safety (Critical)

- **Anchoring:** Soccer goals must be securely anchored to the ground at all times (using sandbags, stakes, or permanent fixtures).
- **Prohibition:** Players are strictly forbidden from climbing on, hanging from, or moving goalposts. Unsecured goals can tip over and cause fatal injuries.

Player Equipment

- **Shin Guards:** Mandatory for all practices and games. Socks must fully cover the shin guards.
 - **Eyewear:** Players requiring glasses should wear sports-goggles or shatter-proof lenses.
 - **Casts:** Hard casts are generally not permitted unless wrapped in bubble wrap/foam and approved by the match referee.
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7. Safeguarding and Conduct

Burlington United FC adheres to SafeSport guidelines to prevent abuse and misconduct.

- **Rule of Two:** A coach should never be alone with a single child in a private setting. There should always be two adults present, or the interaction should happen in an open, public view.
 - **Background Checks:** All coaches, board members, and team managers must pass a background check and complete abuse prevention training.
 - **Anti-Bullying:** The Club has zero tolerance for bullying, hazing, or harassment (verbal, physical, or digital).
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8. Hygiene and Hydration

- **Water Bottles:** Players must bring their own clearly labeled water bottles. Sharing of water bottles is prohibited to prevent the spread of illness.
- **Bloodborne Pathogens:** Any player with an open wound must leave the field. The wound must be covered, and any blood-stained clothing replaced before returning to play.

