

A photograph of rugby players in action, overlaid with a green gradient and curved lines. The players are wearing white jerseys and dark shorts, with one player in the foreground wearing a headguard and shouting.

DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



Standard Approach to Field Emergencies

As part of the SAFE Rugby initiative, we strongly urge all clubs, schools and venues to have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place to guide the actions of those who may be in attendance in the event of a medical incident or player injury.

This plan should be made widely available to all coaches, referees, officials and members to ensure, as much as possible, that an incident in the club or school is managed in the most efficient and timely fashion.

It is vital to have strategies and procedures in place prior to a crisis. By developing an EAP, you will be prepared to handle emergency situations at your practices or games.

The IRFU strongly encourage all clubs and schools to have individuals trained in first aid available at every training session/ match or rugby related activity.

SAFE Rugby training is available for all those involved in club and school rugby, both medical and non-medical, through the IRFU. See www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/safe_rugby.php or contact the First Aid and Injury Prevention Coordinator shane.mooney@irfu.ie or ring 086 021 6064.



Key Points

An Emergency Action Plan should cover, in some detail, the following key points:

1. **Layout of the facility** – a map of the grounds and buildings, where will emergency personnel enter and exit the field, location of keys etc.
2. **Equipment** – first aid kits, AEDs, medical forms etc.
3. **Support Personnel** – coaches, team doctor/physiotherapist, teachers, voluntary ambulance providers etc. and also emergency medical personnel which may attend the incident

Specific people should be allocated to;

- Provide care to the injured person
 - Control bystanders, concerned players or family members
 - Meet/guide emergency medical personnel
 - Travel with the injured athlete to hospital when appropriate
 - Contact the injured player's family or guardian
4. **Communication** – creating a chain of command, allocating a person to deal with media
 5. **Follow-up** – debriefing, completing documentation, refilling first aid kits



Information Specific to Ireland:

- In Ireland, Support Personnel (at the ground) may be available to you in the form of voluntary ambulance providers (Red Cross, Order of Malta, Civil Defence etc.)
- There is a wide range of skills levels and interventions that the voluntary services may be able to provide, from Emergency First Responder (EFR) to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The more advanced level of care at Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic are normally only found crewing the statutory ambulance service vehicles (HSE National Ambulance Service)
- When calling for medical assistance in Ireland, you should dial 999 or 112. You will need to state your location (Eircode if available) and what service you require. You will be asked a series of questions to ascertain the seriousness of the incident. The person taking the call may be able to support you until an ambulance arrives
- All serious incidents should be reported using the Serious Injury and Concussion Report form
- For further information on medical room equipment, team first aid kits, club emergency response kits, and AEDs please see www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/first_aid.php

REMEMBER:

- Refilling of your first aid / emergency response kits is important to ensure the availability of the right equipment for the next event and should be done as soon as possible
- In the event of a significant incident that may attract media attention, the club may decide to have an official deal with any media enquires or they may contact the appropriate branch official for support

World Rugby have developed a guide on this topic which is available at http://www.irbrugbyready.com/pdfs/emergency_plan_en.pdf

