

# AYSO's SAFE HAVEN

Making it Safe For All Players and Volunteers



AMERICAN YOUTH  
SOCCER ORGANIZATION

SAFE HAVEN SERIES

# AYSO'S SAFE HAVEN



everyone plays<sup>®</sup>

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Accredited By:



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# INTRODUCTION

The American Youth Soccer Organization was established in 1964 in Torrance, California with the dream to bring soccer to American children. AYSO continues to be a leader in providing quality youth soccer programs based on AYSO's vision, mission and Six Philosophies; designed to promote a safe, fair, fun, family-friendly environment that enriches the lives of players, volunteers and families.

## AYSO VISION

To provide world-class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

## AYSO MISSION

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs in a fun, family environment based on the AYSO Six Philosophies.

## AYSO SIX PHILOSOPHIES

### EVERYONE PLAYS®

Our goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

### BALANCED TEAMS

Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.

### OPEN REGISTRATION

Our program is open to all children who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

### POSITIVE COACHING

Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.

### GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

We strive to create a safe, fair, fun and positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

### PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as members of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game.



#### **Note: What does it mean to be an AYSO volunteer?**

**It means that volunteers are entrusted with the vision of AYSO and enriching children's lives. It is the vision and mission of AYSO that make it unique among all youth sports organizations.**



# CREATING A SAFE HAVEN

## Child Protection Laws

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 and the Child Protection Act of 1993 legislated requirements to identify and report acts of abuse as well as provide for intervention and prevention. These laws sought to provide children with basic protection by declaring that abuse is against the law.

## Volunteer Protection Legislation

In 1997, Congress passed the Volunteer Protection Act in order to grant certain immunities from liability for monetary damages for those volunteers who meet its requirements. In addition to this act, many states have also enacted Good Samaritan laws in order to provide additional protection to those acting to aid or assist others. These efforts were designed to protect good faith volunteerism in our communities.



With this legislation as a foundation, the design and intent of AYSO's Safe Haven Program is to support the creation of a "safe haven" for all participants by:

- Registering and Screening all Volunteers
- Requiring Training and Certification
- Providing Child and Volunteer Protection Guidelines
- Promoting Safety and Injury Prevention

The components of the Safe Haven Program are not only necessary for creating a safe environment, they are also necessary to ensure our programs enrich the lives of children and their families.

# VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

AYSO is a volunteer driven organization and without the efforts of thousands of volunteers, it would not be able to provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives. In order to afford AYSO volunteers protection under all applicable laws, AYSO requires all volunteers to:

- Complete, eSign, and submit a Volunteer Application each year,
- Be authorized to do their jobs by the Region, Area, Section or other AYSO authority,
- Act within the scope of their Position Descriptions and AYSO Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,
- Complete Safe Haven Training, and be properly trained in their jobs.

Compliance with these volunteer requirements provides volunteers with Soccer Accident Insurance eligibility, the knowledge and skills to create a safe, fair, fun, family-friendly soccer program, volunteer screening and protection under the Volunteer Protection Act.

All AYSO volunteers who sign the Volunteer Application Form consent to background and reference checking in order to protect AYSO participants and resources.



**Note: Volunteers must eSign a Volunteer Application each and every year, consenting to background and reference checking and agreeing to abide by AYSO's Bylaws, Rules & Regulations and Policies and Protocols.**

**AYSO's background screening require volunteer applicants to submit a valid social security number and their consent to be background checked directly to AYSO's background screening vendor.**

## YOUTH VOLUNTEER

Youth Volunteers, under the age of majority, must also have a parent/guardian complete a Youth Volunteer Application every year in addition to any existing Player Registration form. All Youth Volunteers must have parent or guardian approval in order to perform their job duties and must take the AYSO's Safe Haven course. Youth volunteers are not screened.

Youth Volunteers may hold Youth Referee, Youth Team Assistant, Youth VIP Buddy, or other Youth Volunteer positions which are supervised by adults. They may not be a Team Coach, Assistant Coach or Regional Board Member and may never be in a position of supervising players or managing a game from the coach's area. They must abide by the same protection guidelines when in the company of younger players or VIP players and should be protected by the same supervision and protection policies as players.



**Note: Youth volunteers may not be a coach or allowed to supervise other minors.**

# TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

## Training - Education a volunteer receives to perform a specific job or task:

- Position specific training such as Registrar, Treasurer or Coach Administrator training.
- Standard or Level specific training such as 6U Coach, Intermediate Referee or Advanced Management Instructor.

## Certification - Requires confirmation and recognition of three key competencies in a volunteer as follows:

- In the assigned position (job training);
- In child and volunteer protection (Safe Haven training); and
- In the policies, procedures and guidelines of AYSO as provided by their training.

## Continuing Education:

The education a volunteer receives on an annual basis to keep abreast of changes in training or certification standards or to improve knowledge and skills. Examples include Principles of Play, Dispute Resolution, Stewards of the Game and Safe Haven Updates.

## Training and Certification Requirements:

- In AYSO, all Regional Board members, referees and coaches are required to be currently registered, trained and certified. AYSO practices and games are not permitted without a currently registered, certified and trained AYSO coach.
- AYSO scheduled games are not permitted without a currently registered, certified and trained referee in the 10U divisions and above.
  - Referees are not used in the Schoolyard, Playground and Playtime soccer programs.
  - Referees/officials are optional in the 6U and 8U divisions and, if not used, certified and trained AYSO coaches manage the game. These divisions do provide a good opportunity for Youth Referees or new referee candidates to help manage a game.
  - AYSO trained and certified referees may not be required during certain events involving non-AYSO teams in which competition rules will apply.
  - Practice scrimmages do not require a certified and trained referee.



**Attendance at any Section Meeting discipline related workshop satisfies the continuing education needs of AYSO volunteers. Certified volunteers are strongly encouraged to seek Continuing Education opportunities so they stay current on program changes.**

# SAFE HAVEN TRAINING MATRIX

This matrix is designed to help clarify the AYSO training requirements.

Volunteer Position	Safe Haven Training	Job Training	*Suggestions for Continuing Education
Regional Commissioner	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Regional Commissioner Orientation 3 hours RC Training 18 hours	Regional Management 4 hours 30 min Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
Regional Coach Administrator	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Coach Administrator Training 1 hour 15 min	Regional Management 4 hours 30 min Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
Regional Referee Administrator	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Referee Administrator Training 2 hours 30 min	Regional Management 4 hours 30 min Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) 2 hours	Safe Haven Annual Update 1 hour 15 min Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
Treasurer	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Treasurer 2 hours 30 min	Budgeting for the Regional Board 1 hour 15 min
Safety Director	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Safety Director 1 hour 15 min	Safe Haven Annual Update 1 hour 15 min
Regional Registrar	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Registrar 1 hour 15 min	Registration Events 1 hour 15 min
Assistant Regional Commissioner	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Introductory Management 4 hours 30 min	Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
Auditor	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Auditor 1 hour 15 min	Treasurer 2 hour 30 min
Division/Age Group Coordinators	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Division Coordinator	Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
All Other Regional Board & Staff	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Regional Board Member Training 1 hour 15 min	Any Discipline-Related Training, Workshop or Annual Update, Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
Coaches	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Age Appropriate Coach Course Varies	Annual Coach Update 1 hour 15 min
Referees	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Appropriate Referee Course Varies	Annual Referee Update 1 hour 15 min
All Instructors	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Introduction to Instruction Discipline Specific Instructor Course Varies	Any Discipline-Related training or workshop Referee Administrator, Instructor & Assessor Annual Update
Area Director	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	Area Director Training 18 hours	Regional Management 4 hours 30 min Dispute Resolution/Due Process 2 hours 30 min
VIP Administrator	AYSO's Safe Haven 2 hours	VIP Volunteer Training 2 hours 30 min	Player Programs Annual Update 1 hour 15 min

# CHILD AND VOLUNTEER PROTECTION POLICIES

AYSO's Child and Volunteer Protection policies are designed to protect children from abuse by preventing the opportunity for abuse to occur. These same policies protect volunteers by preventing opportunities for misunderstandings and false accusations.

Abuses can occur in all youth sports including AYSO. No single policy or background check can ensure complete safety. But the combination of policies, volunteer screening, education and awareness can minimize the risk that abuses and injuries occur in AYSO.

One of the keys to preventing abuse is recognition and awareness. While it may be an uncomfortable subject, it is important to understand the types of abuses and abusive situations so that they can be prevented.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Psychologists, legislators, educators and AYSO recognize five types of abuse. AYSO also prohibits abusive behaviors in addition to the generally required child abuse reporting standards in order to promote a safe haven.

**Emotional Abuse:** the most common; attacking the emotional well-being and stability of an individual.

- We are required to report suspected emotional abuse visibly affecting the emotional stability of a child.
- In AYSO, emotionally abusive behaviors including making fun of the size, inability or appearance of a player in front of others; derogatory comments; racial, gender or ethnic slurs; threats or bullying by other players and excessive, demeaning verbal assaults by parents are not allowed.

**Physical Abuse:** the most obvious; harming the physical well-being of an individual.

- We are required to report any "non-accidental" physical injury to a child or circumstances creating a substantial risk of harm to the child.
- AYSO also prohibits punishing players by making them run laps or denying them water, player bullying or fighting, and any form of corporal punishment.

**Neglect Abuse:** not always easy to identify; harming an individual by abandoning, ignoring or rejecting basic needs.

- AYSO is required to report the failure of a parent or guardian to provide for the care of a child - including failure to supervise a child.
- AYSO does not allow teams to ignore players by never playing a below average player more than half of every game or allowing a player to be excluded from practice drills by other teammates as examples of neglectful behaviors.

**Sexual Abuse:** frequently hidden; harming an individual through inappropriate sexual contact, lewd behavior, etc.

- We are required to report any form of sexual abuse or exploitation.
- Making lewd comments in front of players or any type of inappropriate touching can be forms of sexual abuse and must be prevented between minors as well. 30% of reported sexual abuse cases occur between minors.

**Ethical Abuse:** the newest category; harming an individual by convincing him or her to do something that is against his or her physical, moral or ethical interests.

- Examples of abusive behavior might include asking a player to "take down" an opposing player or to fake an injury. Adults should not ask children to keep secrets from their parents.

AYSO administrators and officials are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse in many states. Mandated Reporting is generally required when a child is:

- physically injured by other than accidental means, subjected to willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment, or sexually abused or exploited.
- neglected by a parent or caretaker who fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision.

AYSO asks any adult to file a good faith report with the appropriate reporting agency whenever child abuse is suspected. When in doubt, report suspected abuse to the AYSO National Office. Many states have penalties for failing to report.



**Please contact law enforcement immediately if suspected abuse may be life threatening.**

If you suspect a case of abuse, the AYSO National Office Safe Haven staff and the Regional Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) are trained to serve as a resource for the process of reporting suspected child abuse. Remember, reporting is a means of helping and it is our responsibility to report suspected child abuse. Professional agencies will investigate and intervene as appropriate.

Screening who may volunteer in AYSO is the first step in preventing abuse. Training volunteers to recognize abuse and abusive behavior so that it can be reported and stopped is another step. Implementing policies and guidelines for preventing the opportunity for abuse to occur is equally important.

AYSO asks all parents to partner with us to make player safety our #1 priority and to report suspected abuse.



# AYSO CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

Since January 1, 2001, all American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) Regions, Areas, and Sections are required to comply with the AYSO policy on criminal background checks. AYSO acts as the criminal background requesting entity unless specific arrangements have been approved in writing by the AYSO National Executive Director.

Any person wishing to volunteer in AYSO must complete an AYSO Volunteer Application Form in AYSO's official member registration system each year, submit an eSigned copy to the Region and consent to a criminal background check. The application form includes a Criminal Background Check Release. All requested information must be provided by the applicant, including Social Security Number, driver license number (or other government issued photo I.D. if the applicant does not drive) and date of birth.

The Region must send the original copy of any handwritten/signed Volunteer Applications to the Safe Haven Department at the AYSO National Office in a timely fashion such that the most sensitive criminal background checks can be completed prior to the start of any playing season.

Criminal background checks are performed on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The responses on the AYSO Volunteer Application Form must coincide with background check results. Failure to answer honestly may be grounds for disqualification.

Each Region must designate at least one person as the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) who must act as the liaison between the Region and AYSO for purposes of enacting this policy. Regions may appoint more than one CVPA as needed to expedite the screening process at the Region level.

To ensure compliance with all applicable laws, the AYSO Safe Haven staff members at the AYSO National Office are the only people authorized to initiate, review or have access to criminal background reports (unless sanctioned in writing by the National Executive Director). In all cases, the results of any criminal background check must be kept strictly confidential. These reports must be kept in a locked, secure location.

The Notice of Duty to Review Criminal Record process is initiated by the Safe Haven Department of AYSO. When a negative determination is made, a copy of the criminal conviction report received by the Safe Haven Department must be sent to that volunteer applicant in an envelope marked "Confidential – to be opened by addressee only," along with the Notice of Duty to Review Criminal Record cover letter.

If a conviction is disclosed or discovered, the AYSO Safe Haven Department must make a decision on whether or not the applicant may be used based on the following guidelines and partial Table of Convictions and advise the Region of its decision. As used in this policy, the term conviction refers to a conviction entered after a trial, after a guilty plea or after a plea of no contest/nolo contendere.

Any application form that does not contain honest answers or that misrepresents the number, type or gravity of any such conviction(s) will not be approved irrespective of the nature of the offense or the time that has transpired since the conviction.

Any individual on probation or required to complete a court ordered rehabilitation or other such program following a conviction for a crime appearing on the Table of Convictions will not be considered to serve as a volunteer until all terms and conditions established by the court have been satisfied and proof of completion submitted to AYSO.

Any person convicted of a crime against or otherwise involving a minor at any time in the past will not be approved to be a volunteer.

Most felony convictions will result in a negative determination. Evidence of multiple convictions, either felony or misdemeanor, are likely to also result in a negative determination. Where a conviction is remote in time or where the applicant's conduct since the conviction(s) indicates rehabilitation or lack of risk to the membership and the program, some leeway may be provided, but only with the concurrence of the RC and CVPA.

Persons convicted of a crime of violence or other serious crime against a person within the prior 20 years will be disqualified from any volunteer position.

Persons convicted of sex offences will be disqualified from volunteering in AYSO.

Persons convicted of a theft related crime or fraud within the prior 15 years will be disqualified from any position involving the handling of funds, property or personal identification information.

Persons convicted of a serious substance abuse crime within the past 10 years will be disqualified from any coaching position, referee assignment or any position that leads children's activities.

Persons convicted of less serious crimes of violence, substance abuse or one of the listed miscellaneous crimes within the past 5 years will be disqualified from any coaching position or any position that leads children's activities.

In certain limited instances, AYSO will disqualify volunteers who have been arrested for a crime, even if the arrest later results in no charges being filed. While AYSO casts no judgment about any of the allegations and/or accusations in these instances, AYSO's overriding and compelling interest is to provide a safe, fair and fun environment for children.

DUI: Persons convicted of driving while under the influence or other traffic/conduct related crimes within the preceding 3 years will be disqualified from holding the position of team coach or assistant coach. Persons convicted of driving under the influence within the preceding 3 years may be accepted for other volunteer positions with the understanding that they are prohibited from driving any child or AYSO volunteer other than immediate family members to or from an AYSO activity.

If any discretion is exercised in the application of this policy, it must be exercised in a uniform manner, so that substantially similar convictions and circumstances result in substantially similar treatment of potential volunteers. The CVPA or Regional Commissioner (RC) will be immediately notified when a negative determination is made, or if there are issues related to an application. The specific results leading to a negative determination must remain confidential unless the applicant is willing to reveal the results to the RC or CVPA.



**Because of the serious implications to the entire AYSO organization, all Regions, Areas and Sections must comply with the decisions made by the Safe Haven Department of the National Office under this policy.**



**Individuals disqualified or restricted by Safe Haven are not entitled to due process at the Region, Area or Section level. Their right of review and to be heard is conducted in conjunction with their Notice of Duty to Review Criminal Background.**

# TABLE OF CONVICTIONS

This is a partial list only.

## Violent Crimes & Serious Crimes Against A Person

Aggravated Assault	Possession of Explosives
Aggravated Battery w/ Firearm	Preventing a 911 Call
Armed Robbery	Terrorism
Arson	Reckless Homicide
Assault	Robbery
Attempted Murder	Second Degree Murder
Battery	Stalking
Blackmail	Solicitation for Murder
Cruelty to Animals	Tampering w/ Food or Drugs
Domestic Battery	Threatening Public Officials
Extortion	Treason
Hate Crime	Unlawful Restraint
Home Invasion	Vehicular Car Jacking
Hit and Run Causing Injury/Death	Vehicular Endangerment
Kidnapping	Violation of Order of Protection
Murder	

## Less Serious Crimes Against A Person

Criminal Threats of Death/Bodily Harm	Intimidation
Disturbing the Peace- fighting	Simple Assault
Harassment	Restraining Order
Harassment of Jurors or Witnesses	Vehicular Manslaughter While Intoxicated
Involuntary Manslaughter	

## Sex Offenses

Bigamy	Obscene Phone Calls
Child Pornography	Obscenity
Criminal Sexual Abuse	Pandering
Criminal Sexual Assault	Pimping
Criminal Transmission of HIV	Prostitution
Distribution/Sale of Pornography to a Minor	Public Indecency
Indecent Exposure	Sex with a Minor
Indecent Solicitation of a Child	Sexual Exploitation of a Child
Keeping a Place of Prostitution	Solicitation of a Sexual Act
Lewd and Lascivious Behavior	

## Fraud

Deceptive Sales	Odometer Fraud
Fraudulent Advertisement	Public Aid Fraud
Fraudulent Use of Access Card	Retail Fraud
Insurance Fraud	Welfare Fraud
Mail and Wire Fraud	

# TABLE OF CONVICTIONS

This is a partial list only.

## Theft-Related Crimes

Bad Checks  
Bid Rigging  
Bid Rotating & Kickbacks  
Bribery  
Burglary  
Computer Hacking/Trespass  
Embezzlement  
Fencing of Stolen goods  
Petty Theft  
Possession of Burglary Tools  
Receiving Stolen Property

Forgery  
Grand Theft  
Identity Theft  
Industrial Espionage  
Interference with Public Contracts  
Looting  
Money Laundering  
Misuse of Credit Card  
Tax Evasion  
Theft of Intellectual Property  
Ticket Scalping

## Serious Substance Abuse Crimes

Abuse of Prescription Medicines  
Criminal Drug Conspiracy  
Distribution of Alcohol to Minors  
Illegal Transportation of Controlled Substances

Possession of Marijuana, more than one ounce  
Possession of Illegal Substances  
Sale or Manufacture of Illegal Substances

## Miscellaneous Substance Abuse Crimes

Possession of Drug Paraphernalia  
Possession of Marijuana (less than 1 oz.)

Sale of Alcohol to a Minor

## Miscellaneous Crimes

Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm  
Concealing or Aiding a Fugitive  
Criminal Damage to Property  
Criminal Trespass  
Discrimination in Sale of Real Estate  
Environmental Crimes  
Gunrunning  
Hit and Run with Damage  
Identity Switching  
Illegal Gambling  
Impersonating a Law Enforcement Officer

Unlawful Sale of Firearms  
Interference with Judicial Proceeding  
Obstructing Justice  
Legislative Misconduct  
Resisting Arrest  
Perjury  
Tampering with Public Records  
Unlawful Possession of Weapons  
Unlawful Use of Body Armor  
Unlawful Use, Sale, or Discharge of a Metal Piercing Bullet  
Vandalism

## Traffic/Conduct Crimes

Disorderly Conduct  
Disturbing the Peace  
Driving Under the Influence  
Drunk in Public  
Driving without a License/Insurance

Operating Under the Influence  
Reckless Conduct  
Reckless Driving  
Repeated Traffic Offenses  
Wet and Reckless Driving

# SUPERVISION PROTOCOLS

One of the most important protection methods is implementing the recommended supervision protocols. AYSO recommends:

- One adult for every 8 or fewer children.
- At least two adults present at ALL times.
- At least one adult of the same gender as the players.
- No adult should ever be alone with a child other than their own child.
- A minimum of 3 individuals for the AYSO "Buddy System."

For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should ever be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.

The Team coach is responsible for the players on his/her team until they are picked up or otherwise leave the area as authorized by their parents. No child should ever be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents should be reminded of the importance of picking up their children in a timely manner and the importance of establishing contact with the coach when dropping their child off at the fields.

AYSO does not encourage children to walk or ride a bicycle home alone. However, if it is necessary, the coach should secure a release form from the parents or guardians to ensure their approval. The release form may also be used by a parent to authorize another adult to pick up his/her child.



**The Team coach is responsible for the players on his/her team until they are picked up or otherwise leave the area as authorized by their parents.**

# PROTECTION GUIDELINES

In order to prevent misunderstandings, physical contact with children should be:

- In response to the need of the child only.
- With the child's permission.
- Respectful of any resistance or hesitation.
- Careful to avoid private parts.
- In the open; not in private.
- Brief and limited in duration.
- Age and developmentally appropriate.

A child's comfort level with touching is influenced by many factors including age, developmental stages, social and emotional well-being, life experiences, and gender, all of which change over time.



Adults should avoid being alone with a child including transporting a child in a car. When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a place out of earshot but within sight of others for a conference. Maintain transparency at all times.

Privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes should be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Adult volunteers should preserve their own privacy in these situations as well.

When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.



Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviors.

Do not use corporal punishment in any form—spanking, slapping, hitting, etc.

It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behavior, the adult must correct the behavior and decline any overture. Adults who work with children should take precautions to protect kids from abuse and also to protect themselves from misunderstandings or accusations.



***Play it Safe...*** Contact a Region Board Member, the AYSO National Office, Child Welfare/Protective Services, Law Enforcement or the reference organizations at the end of this manual, if you have any reason to suspect a child is being harmed or if you witness suspicious behaviors.

## SOCIAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

In keeping with the goal of the Safe Haven program to address the growing need to protect children from abuse which includes the invasion of privacy rights and/or volunteers from misunderstandings and false accusations, the following recommendations are proposed for electronic communications and the use of social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter.

Consistent with Safe Haven Child and Volunteer Protection Policies, AYSO asks all adults, regardless of whether they have a current volunteer application form on file, to maintain transparency in their communications with children while protecting children's identity and privacy. It is the responsibility of adults to maintain appropriate boundaries.

All communications regarding AYSO activities and participation in the program must be directed to parents and guardians including voice messages, e-mails and text messages. It is up to a child's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to forward necessary communications to their children. If, for older players or youth volunteers, parents/guardians allow direct communications with a player or youth volunteers, parents must still be copied on any and all messages. Adults should refrain from private, personal, on-going electronic conversations with children.

All AYSO websites and pages on Social Media sites such as Facebook and Twitter must be monitored to prevent inappropriate postings, blogs or "tweets" which either divulge the identity of minors or include any disparaging comments or pictures. Neither AYSO websites nor social media sites may be conduits for social bullying, airing grievances or gateways for predators. All AYSO or social media sites/pages should conform to the rules and regulations for use and safety as outlined by the site owner.

The AYSO Player Registration Form includes a general photo release for non-commercial purposes. Pictures posted on public sites should not include the names of individual players to avoid identifying children to the wrong individuals. Team rosters with names, numbers and contact information must not be posted on any public website or social media page.

Operation and maintenance of all AYSO websites should conform to AYSO's Privacy Policy for online privacy protection and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA of 2000) which establishes mandated disclosures, parental notifications and options for all online activities when information is requested from children under 13 years of age. A copy of the Privacy Policy is available on the website: <http://www.ayso.org>.

The advantages and convenience of electronic communications and social media pages make them valuable and necessary tools for communicating with AYSO participants. As long as the same Safe Haven guidelines for interactions between adults and children are used in electronic media, the risk of abuse and misunderstandings can be minimized. Parents play a critical role in keeping children safe online and they must be included in all communications. Encourage parents to help with online safety by providing links to documents such as "A Parents' Guide to Facebook" and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's "How to Protect Kids' Privacy Online."

## USE OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

### Legal Issues

It is illegal for minors to possess, control or use alcohol or tobacco products or prescription-only drugs without authority, and such possession subjects the minor to prosecution in juvenile court.

An adult who knowingly provides such substances to a minor is subject to criminal prosecution in any state in which such act is committed. Such prosecution can lead to mandatory fines and potential jail sentences of up to one year in most cases.

- The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 does not protect any volunteer who commits a criminal offense involving alcohol, tobacco products and illegal or prescription-only drugs with minors.
- AYSO National Rule and Regulation I. E. 1. F., relating to the duties and responsibilities of coaches and officials, provides as follows:



**“Present a healthy and safe athletic environment for team members, including but not limited to, not consuming alcoholic beverages, using tobacco products or smoking or simulating smoking or the use of tobacco products during practices or matches or in the immediate vicinity of the soccer fields.”**

- It is unlawful for a person under 21 years of age to possess or use alcohol.
- In most states it is unlawful for a person under 18 years of age to remain within a drinking establishment that does not serve meals, even if in the company of an adult 21 years of age or older.
- In most states it is unlawful for a person under the age of 18 to possess or use a tobacco product.
- AYSO National Policy Statement 5.4 states that every AYSO official must avoid improper acts and the violation of any governmental laws or regulations in the performance of the volunteer AYSO duties.
- Mere possession of an illegal drug or prescription-only drug without a prescription would violate criminal laws and the AYSO policy statement.



### **AYSO Volunteers as Role Models**

Unfortunately, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs seem easily obtainable by almost any child who wishes to possess them. The messages we send by our behavior to the impressionable young players are important. Willing or not, we are their role models, and we must do our best to set good examples.

Coaches who observe one of their players taking a pill without prior information from the parents may wish to inquire of the child and then get back to the parents to verify the information. Caution should be exercised when a player has legitimate possession of a prescription-only drug to ensure he or she does not share the medicine with another child. Prescription medicines are controlled so as to avoid their use by those persons who may suffer a dangerous reaction to the drug or an overdose of such drug.

If you take a prescription drug, you may wish to share that information with players so that they will recognize the danger signs if you suffer a medical problem at a practice or game. For example, if you carry pills for heart irregularities, you might consider telling the players about the purpose of such medication as a precautionary measure to be taken if you suffer from chest pains. Advising players of your condition and where the nitro pills can be found might save your life. Sharing such information about yourself might also help a player taking a prescription drug for asthma or other chronic condition to be comfortable about sharing similar information with you.

## **PLAYER PRIVACY**

### **Protecting the identity of minors**

Whether its on the internet or at the fields, it is important to protect the identity of children from individuals who may seek to do them harm. For these reasons, Parent's Magazine and other child advocates strongly recommend that against children wearing personalized clothing or carrying personalized backpacks which would make their names familiar to a stranger.

Do not publish rosters of players with any two identifiers: names and numbers, names and pictures on any public website or publish a team picture in local newspapers identifying each player in the picture by name (i.e. Backrow, I to r, etc.) Use caution on team banners used at fields and when ordering team apparel

Do not tag players in pictures posted on public social media sites. Use private team sites for sharing pictures, rosters, contact information among team families.

**If Player or Volunteer Registration Forms are lost or stolen, please report the loss to the Risk Management Department of the National Office immediately so that families may be appropriately notified and cautious about any unsolicited communications.**

# PLAY IT SAFE

It is the responsibility of all participants to work together to minimize the risk of injuries and to create a safe environment. When in doubt about a safety concern, “play it safe” and cancel the activity.

## GOALPOST SAFETY

Movable soccer goals can tip over causing injury or death. This typical tip-over incident can happen when a child or adult climbs on or hangs from the crossbar of a soccer goal which was left unattended or improperly anchored. The heavy goal tips over and injures the individual, sometimes causing death. Even a gust of wind can topple a goal.

To help avoid these incidents, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges consumers, school officials, soccer coaches, players and organizers to follow these safety guidelines:

- Securely anchor or counterweight portable goals at all times.
- Check all connecting hardware before each use. Replace damaged or missing fasteners immediately.
- Ensure safety labels are clearly visible.
- Never allow anyone to climb on the net or goal framework.
- Remove nets when goals are not in use.
- Tip unused goals onto their goal face, or move against a fence, dugout or any other similar sturdy fixture, and chain/lock them together..
- Fully disassemble goals for seasonal storage.



## PLAYING FIELD INSPECTIONS

The ideal playing field for most players is a level field of short-cut grass in a wide open area that is designed specifically for soccer. However, these conditions are rare and playing fields are usually set-up in areas shared by many different people and organizations.

Many things can make a field unsafe for play, represent a potential for injury to players and put volunteers and spectators at risk. The Regional Safety Director should work with the Region's field director and /or field coordinators to ensure that the Region's staff is trained about potential hazards and that all fields are safe for participants.



### Playing Field Conditions

Certain playing field conditions may contribute to increased risk for injury. Field coordinators, referees, and coaches should be instructed to inspect fields for safety hazards as appropriate:

- prior to the start of the season in order to correct permanent hazards;
- at the beginning of each game day to evaluate weather and field conditions; and
- before each game to remove hazards created by debris or foreign objects left behind throughout the day.

Field inspections should look for and correct any of the following conditions:

- Very dry/hard surfaces which create a greater impact upon falling and provide less secure footing for running, stopping, changing direction.
- Wet fields which also increase risk for slipping and falling.
- Foreign objects on the field of play like rocks, broken glass, trash, pencils and metal objects which can effect player and referee footing on the field and cause cuts, bruises and other injuries on impact.
- Sprinkler heads, faucets, drains or any other protruding hazards.
- Gopher holes, divots or bumps which often cause ankle injuries and/or falls.

### Physical Surroundings

With field space difficult to secure, playing fields are often placed wherever grass is growing. Unfortunately, these surroundings can also create potential hazards:

- Walls, fences, poles/posts too close to playing fields.
- Trees, plants, shrubs protruding into field of play or too close to touch lines.
- Playing fields so close to each other so that players, stray balls and spectators enter games in play.
- Coach, player, spectator seating areas too close to fields.
- Playing fields not protected/shielded from cars, e.g. cars parking on playground adjacent to playing fields without a protective barrier.
- Temporary awnings or canopies which may fall on participants during wind or rain storms.
- Field equipment from other sports like baseball infields, backstops, football sleds, etc.
- Standing water, West Nile mosquito breeding ground (contact local officials for remedy).

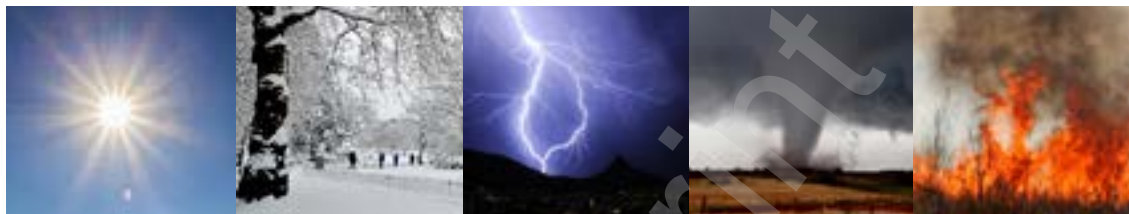
## GOLF CARTS

Far too many people are involved in golf cart accidents, resulting in personal injury, property damage and even death. Almost all of these incidents could have been prevented. Too often, people have little experience driving these carts and do not understand the true risks associated with improper handling of these vehicles.

- Only AYSO registered, authorized and trained adult licensed drivers may operate a golf or utility cart and it must be operated according to manufacturer specifications.
- Drivers and permitted passengers must remain seated at all times. Care should be taken to avoid over loading the cart.
- Maintain safe cart speeds, on level terrain to avoid accidents and roll-overs.
- Never leave keys in the cart or park the cart on pedestrian walkways and emergency lanes.



## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS



Just as field conditions can pose safety risks, so can weather conditions. The Regional Board should develop standard guidelines for dealing with adverse weather conditions including communication procedures to ensure that everyone understands the appropriate actions to take in order to protect the safety of all participants. These guidelines should address:

- Hot weather and risks of dehydration and heat exhaustion or stroke.
- Cold weather and hypothermia.
- Tornado/hurricane warnings/watches.
- Wildfires and other air quality concerns.
- Thunder and lightning.

Creating a safe haven includes evaluating these environmental conditions and ensuring safety. Public announcements and recommendations for these conditions should take precedence over published general safety guidelines.

### Hot Weather

When temperatures and humidity rise significantly above normal levels for a community, so does the potential for risk. Be aware of these conditions and be prepared to stop or delay games for proper hydration. Consider allowing for more and frequent water stoppages in addition to substitution stoppages. Incidents of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke and sunburn are usually avoidable. The proper and continued hydration of players and volunteers prior to the scheduled event is important. Consider notifying players and volunteers 24 hours before an event and ask them to hydrate in advance.

Sunscreen of appropriate strength should be applied frequently. Consider adding shade for participants via tents in addition to shade provided by trees or buildings. Scheduling of games outside of the hottest part of the day, whenever possible, is preferred. When scheduling multiple games in a day or over several days when conducting tournaments, it is recommended that there be at least two hours between games and only two games per day for players. Adjustments may be made to this recommendation when playing time is reduced as recommended in the AYSO Playtime Study guidelines.

### Cold Weather

Risk of hypothermia, frostbite and injury from numbness are usually avoidable. Consider canceling games when the weather is cold enough to adversely affect players. Be aware of the dangers associated with cold weather and be prepared to delay or even terminate games to protect the players.

Freezing rain, hail, snow, sleet or heavy rain can cause field conditions to deteriorate rapidly. Loss of solid footing can cause injury. Check field conditions before and during games. Be prepared to stop or delay games if severe weather conditions cause the field to become unsafe for participants.

Players should be permitted to wear appropriate and safe clothing (extra garments under the jersey and shorts, knit hats and gloves, etc.) to protect against cold and windy weather conditions.

### **Tornado/Hurricane Warnings and Watches**

**TORNADO WATCH:** Tornadoes are possible in the area; remain alert for approaching storm.

**TORNADO WARNING:** A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to a pre-designated place of safety.

When events and activities are calendared during tornado or hurricane seasons, all participants should be informed of the plan of action for their occurrence.

Upon notification of a tornado warning, all activities and events should be cancelled until weather conditions and field conditions allow the activity to resume.

### **Recognizing the Danger – What to Look and Listen For**

Look out for dark, often greenish skies, and a wall cloud, large hail and loud roar similar to a freight train. If a warning is issued and you are indoors, stay away from windows and move to an interior room or hallway or the lowest floor; get under a sturdy piece of furniture if possible. At the fields or in route, get out of automobiles, trailers or camping type vehicles.

Hurricanes, for the most part, start out as thunderstorms. Thunderstorms intensify into tropical depressions, then into tropical storms and finally become hurricanes.

Most hurricanes are tracked at least 7-10 days in advance. When information indicates that this type of severe weather is probable, the event should be postponed or cancelled.

### **Thunder and Lightning**

A lightning safety plan should be an integral part of the planning process for any outdoor event. Do not wait for storm clouds to develop before considering what to do should lightning threaten. An effective plan begins long before any lightning threat is realized.

The key to an effective lightning safety action plan lies in answers to the following questions:

1. Where is the safest lightning shelter?
2. How far is the group from that location?
3. How long will it take to get the group there?

Knowing the answers to these questions and formulating a plan of action accordingly will likely reduce the chances of anyone being struck by lightning.

If a Region has frequent thunderstorms, the Region should consider posting a safety policy on the Region's website, discussing it in Safe Haven® courses, emphasizing it at all coach, referee and team parent orientation meetings and putting it in the Region Handbook distributed to participating families.

In tournament play or other special events, if there is a possibility of thunder and lightning storms, a pre-event meeting to discuss guidelines, safety procedures, duties and responsibilities of all event staff and participants should be conducted. A communication plan should also be considered so this information can be given to all participants and volunteers in order to execute emergency planning procedures.

Event officials should consult and determine the course of action – give the “all clear” sign for games to resume, cancel the balance of ongoing games or cancel games for the day. Event administrators, Regional Commissioners or their designees, including the Coach Administrator, Referee Administrator or referees, should have the authority, as so designated, to delay the start of play, call a halt in play or suspend/terminate a game due to severe weather conditions.

Most people are struck by lightning before and after storms have peaked, not at the height of a thunderstorm. Lightning can strike from as far away as ten miles and in clear skies.

### **Recognizing the Danger – And Knowing What to Do**

Many communities and parks systems have lightning detection and tornado warning systems in place. Follow the guidelines established at these facilities. When storm-warning systems indicate severe weather danger, usually by siren, cease all field activities and seek shelter immediately. Know how to use the warning systems in place and heed all warnings even if you are told there is a possibility of a false alarm.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) position on lightning is that if you can hear thunder you are within reach of lightning and referees must protect the safety of all participants by stopping game activities quickly so that participants and spectators may evacuate to a safer place before the lightning threat becomes significant.

**When thunder is heard, it is within striking distance. Seek shelter immediately.** Do not restart games until after no thunder has been heard nor lightning flashes seen for at least 30 minutes, or if there is a warning system in place, the community ALL CLEAR SIREN has been sounded.

### **Distinguishing Between Safe and Unsafe Shelters**

NOTE: Remember, the time when activities are stopped is the time when people BEGIN to seek shelter. Allow adequate time for all to seek and reach shelter safely. Only the most important items should be retrieved such as purses, baby bags, car keys, etc. Delays to retrieve all personal belongings raise the risk of danger.

#### **Safe Shelter Areas**

- INSIDE a substantial building (roof AND completely enclosed walls) towards the middle of the building
- Except for tornadoes or hurricanes, INSIDE a fully enclosed metal vehicle with the windows completely closed.

#### **Unsafe Shelter Areas**

- Around or near all metal objects: goals, flag poles, fences, gates, high mast light poles, bleachers.
- Around or near all trees, water, open fields, high ground.
- Around, near or in small buildings, picnic shelters, concession stands, tents.

#### **If Caught Out in the Open**

NOTE: No place outside should be considered safe when severe weather exists. Encourage all participants to seek shelter indoors.

- AVOID groups of people. Spread out to reduce the risk. Shield children.
- AVOID being the tallest object.
- Seek cover in clumps of bushes. CROUCH down as low as possible and cover your head with your forearms; assist children as they will most often be frightened.

#### **If Someone is Injured**

- Call 9-1-1 immediately. If qualified to do so, apply CPR and First-Aid, if necessary, until medical staff arrives.
- All safety personnel should be educated on what and when to act or react in severe weather conditions.

NOTE: People who have been struck by lightning do not carry a charge and are safe to touch

# INJURY PREVENTION

## ***Play it safe...***

- Be safety conscious. Take the time to inspect players, game equipment and playing fields.
- Properly store field equipment such as corner flags and field marking equipment after each game.
- Safely disassemble and store goals during the off-season.
- Take immediate proactive corrective measures to remedy known safety hazards.
- Inform others—players, coaches, referees, and board members of known hazards and potential risks.
- Move to a safer location if necessary and possible. Cancel an activity if unsafe conditions cannot be corrected.

# PLAYER PROTECTION

Referees, coaches and Region staff should consult the Laws of the Game for exact rules on player equipment and attire. In general, “A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player.” The referee is the sole judge of whether or not the individual item in question is permissible to wear in the game.

## **Are there any special requirements for soccer shoes and shinguards?**

Soccer shoes and shinguards made by any established soccer equipment manufacturer are acceptable. Other shoes are acceptable if, in the opinion of the referee, they are not dangerous to the player wearing them or to another player and the shinguards afford the player a reasonable degree of protection. A piece of cardboard, rolled up newspaper or similar makeshift items do not constitute proper shinguards. The referee must inspect all cleats to ensure there are no sharp edges; this is especially important for aluminum and nylon cleats.

Shinguards must be completely covered by the player’s stockings. Players are not allowed to wear their shinguards over their stockings and then roll the stockings down over the shinguards. The shinguards must be worn completely under the stockings.

## **Can players wear Medical Alert Bracelets?**

Children may participate in matches and practices while wearing medical alert bracelets. It is important that this information remains visible. However, to ensure the bracelet does not present a danger to the player or other players it must be secured to the player with tape, a cloth wristband or something equivalent, taking care to leave the information visible.

We must all recognize that if the bracelet is removed and lost or hidden in any way, the child might be put in danger particularly if the parents are not present to ensure that the medical condition is known. We must also recognize that it is unlikely that a medical alert bracelet, when properly covered, will pose a danger to the other children who are participating. Medical alert sports bands with a snug-fitting, soft, polyester ribbon band are available and should be permitted without modification.

## **May a player wear a cast or splint?**

The AYSO National Rules and Regulations paragraph VI.K. states:

“Players shall not be allowed to practice or participate in any match with any type of cast or splint.”

## **May a player remove a cast or splint in order to participate?**

The AYSO National Rules and Regulations paragraph VI.K. states:

“Removal of any type of cast or splint at the field or surrounding area in order to participate shall disqualify the player from any practice session or match.”

Removable casts are designed to facilitate personal hygiene and dressing; they are not designed to be removed so that a player may engage in contact sports.

## **Are players permitted to wear knee braces?**

AYSO The AYSO National Policy Statement 2.9 titled “Knee Braces” reads as follows:

AYSO will not prohibit the use of knee braces by players in AYSO events and programs, provided that the knee brace is adequately covered and padded, in the opinion of the referee, so as to eliminate the possibility of its use causing injury to other players on the field of play.

The difference between casts or splints and knee braces is that a cast or splint is used for the treatment of a temporary injury to provide for healing. The use of a knee brace is different in that it is used to provide support and/or flexibility. Knee braces are designed to allow for flexibility of movement, while conversely, a cast or splint is designed to restrict mobility.

### **Are players permitted to wear any other kind of medical devices?**

If the device is needed to restrict mobility, protect an injury or support proper alignment to expedite the healing process of a temporary injury and is hard (cast, splint, etc.) then this is not allowed. If, on the other hand, the protective device is used to provide support, flexibility or enable an otherwise healthy player to function normally such as a knee brace, prosthesis, hearing aid, insulin pump, etc. then this would be allowed provided the device was sufficiently padded to prevent injury to the player and other players. The *Laws of the Game* specify that “A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player.” The referee is the sole judge of whether or not the individual item in question is permissible to wear in the match.

### **May players wear glasses?**

Players who require prescription glasses are to be allowed to wear them during practices and matches. For the greatest safety, retaining straps should be worn or rubber bands may be used for this purpose. Prescription goggles, such as the type used by racquetball players, are also permitted subject to the approval of the referee prior to the start of the match. Spectacle guards made of plastic or other hard material are not permitted.

### **May players wear hearing aids?**

Players who normally wear hearing aids are also allowed to wear them during practices or matches.

### **Are players permitted to wear mouthguards?**

AYSO does not prohibit the use of mouthguards. Parents are encouraged to consult their child’s dentist or orthodontist to determine what, if any, mouthguard is appropriate for their child. Players wearing mouthguards should not be prevented from participating in practice or matches.

### **Are players permitted to wear jewelry, earrings or studs?**

Jewelry, including earrings, of any kind worn in any visible body piercing or any hard replacement stud used when the jewelry is not being worn must be removed before the player is allowed to participate in a practice or match. Covering the jewelry or hard replacement stud with tape, padding or bandage is not sufficient; the jewelry or hard replacement stud must be removed before playing. Subject to approval of the referee, various soft, flexible materials that present no danger to the player or other players may be used to keep recent body piercings open for participation during matches.

In the case of visible taped-over or bandaged suspected piercings, referees must not ask players to lift or remove articles of clothing or bandages. It is acceptable however, to ask a player if the tape or bandages is covering an earring. The referee must accept the answer provided, regardless of suspicion and if in the opinion of the referee, the item is deemed to be dangerous, the player will not be allowed to participate on that day.

Since it is rare that an earlobe or eyebrow is taped as the result of an injury, the referee should suspect that a player is using tape or other covering to hide jewelry or a hard replacement stud. It is the responsibility of the referee to ask the coach whether or not the player has been injured or is hiding jewelry or a hard replacement stud. This should be done in a cordial manner and in the presence of the player. An assistant referee or other official must also be present. Coaches have the responsibility of not allowing players wearing jewelry to participate in practices or matches.

If the coach confirms that it is an injury being covered, the referee may not prohibit the player from playing because of the tape or covering. In either case, the referee must indicate in his or her match report which players and coaches were questioned and their responses.

Coaches and referees are role models and should avoid wearing jewelry, earrings and hard replacement studs during practices or matches.

### **May players wear additional protective equipment?**

The *Laws of the Game* specify the following regarding Non-Basic Equipment:

- A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself/herself or another player.
- Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks, knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight, padded material are not considered to be dangerous and are therefore permitted.
- New technology has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the players themselves and of other players.

AYSO neither endorses nor refutes the claims of companies which produce products intended to increase player safety. It is the responsibility of the referee to examine the specific piece of equipment in question and then make a decision regarding

whether or not it presents any danger to the player themselves or to other players. The referee has the obligation and right to allow or disallow players wearing the item depending upon the referee's best judgment.

Face masks similar to the type hockey goalies or football players wear are not allowed for goalkeepers or field players because they are constructed of hard material and would pose a danger to other players.

Players may be allowed to wear soft hats or caps without brims. They must not constitute a danger to the player or to other players and must be approved by the referee. Goalkeepers may wear a brimmed hat or cap. In addition to the above requirements the brim must also be made of a soft material and must be approved by the referee. Baseball-style caps with hard brims are not acceptable even if worn backwards.

May players wear sweatbands, bandanas, scarves or other items to secure hair? The referee is the sole judge of whether or not such items may be worn based on the referee's assessment of the particular item and its function. Supplemental items worn for adornment are generally not permitted. Items the referee believes are not dangerous to the player or to other players and serve the purpose of hair control, perspiration absorption or to conform to religious requirements are permitted. These items should be a neutral color free of inappropriate design, logo or meaning.

#### **May players wear gloves?**

Goalkeepers are traditionally allowed to wear gloves. Other players may also wear gloves if, in the opinion of the referee, the equipment poses no danger.

## **OTHER SAFETY CONCERNS**

Because of known risks of injury and insurance coverage restrictions, AYSO does not allow the following:

- Inflatable amusement devices.
- Fireworks or the sale of fireworks.
- Amusement or carnival rides.
- Tractor pulls or hay rides.
- Rock climbing walls, bungee type rides.
- Trampolines, other high risk activities.
- Adults playing in scrimmages or games against minors.
- Travel by AYSO participants in 15 passenger vans.



**Adults must not play in soccer scrimmages or games against minor players to prevent serious accidental injury to players.**

# EMERGENCY MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The primary role of all volunteers is one of injury prevention and first aid, not diagnosis or treatment of injuries. It is important for all volunteers to recognize the symptoms of potentially serious medical emergencies and to know when to summon emergency medical professionals.

## FIRST-AID TRAINING

First-Aid is the immediate treatment given before regular medical care is available. Whenever possible, it is strongly recommended that first-aid training opportunities be made available to Regional volunteers, with particular emphasis on basic training for coaches. Training should be conducted by certified professionals from local organizations such as a chapter of the American Red Cross, the Fire Department or hospital, who are often willing to volunteer their time. It is highly recommended that all coaches receive basic first-aid training; however, it is not a requirement that all coaches be first-aid certified.

### Basic First-Aid Kit

A basic first-aid kit should be available to each team during all practices and games. These first-aid kits can be provided to each coach for the season or can be available at a standardized location at each soccer field used for practices or games. First-aid kits vary in content, but a basic first-aid kit should contain at least the following items:

- Adhesive bandage strips (10 each)
- Adhesive bandage (3 large and 3 medium)
- Antiseptic wipes (5 each)
- 2X2 gauze (10 each)
- Elastic wrap (2 each)
- Individual first-aid cream packets
- Non-latex gloves (2 pair)
- Mouth rescue breather (1 each)
- Instant Cold pack



**Caution:** Application of elastic wrap or athlete tape should be limited to use by individuals trained in their application to avoid impairing circulation or causing further injury.



**If local emergency response phone numbers are available, these numbers should be included in the first-aid kit.**



**Reminder:** Be sure to check and re-stock First-Aid Kits as needed.

# EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATIONS

Coaches must have hand-signed or eSigned Player Registration Forms and any other required emergency treatment authorization forms on hand at all practices and games.

Arrangements should be made to keep original signed copies on the field for youth volunteers or require them to carry a signed copy with them at all times while performing their volunteer duties.

## FIRST-AID TREATMENT FOR COMMON INJURIES

The priority of any First-Aid training, if provided to Regional staff, should be to ensure that volunteers are able to recognize the signs, symptoms and severity of common conditions including the following injuries and immediate responses:

### Bleeding

- Bleeding, if serious, can be life-threatening and professional medical help should be sought immediately when it cannot be stopped. Call 911. Bleeding can be controlled with a few basic techniques.
- Apply pressure directly to wound, place a bandage over the wound and hold it in place with your gloved hand. If the bandage becomes blood soaked, do not remove the bandage but add a clean bandage on top. If help is available, ask them to cover the victim to aid in preventing shock.
- If bleeding continues, continue applying pressure and elevate the injured area above the level of the heart. Do not elevate if serious internal injury or fracture is possible. CALL 911 or other emergency medical response number.
- Pressure points can help stop bleeding in arms or legs. For bleeding in the arm, apply pressure to the brachial artery located inside the upper arm between the armpit and elbow. For bleeding in the leg, apply pressure to the femoral artery located at the top of the leg on the crease between the leg and the torso. Cover victim to prevent shock.

### Difficulty Breathing

- Try to calm the individual and ask if they are all right. If they are choking and cannot respond verbally, perform the Heimlich maneuver if trained to do so. Consult a medical professional for instructions.
- If breathing difficulty results from an allergic reaction, or continues, get professional help immediately. Call 911.

### Loss of Consciousness

- Get professional medical help immediately. Call 911.
- Never move the head or neck.
- Stay calm and wait for emergency help to arrive.
- Do not leave the victim alone.
- Do not move victim, let professional help move the victim.

### Hypothermia

- Does not require sub-zero temperatures.
- Can occur with high winds, rain, snowfall or under-dressing for weather.
- Early signs include shivering, bluish tingle to lips – treat immediately to prevent further progression.
- Uncontrollable shivering, weakness, loss of coordination, slowed breathing or heart rate and pale, blue and cold skin – call for emergency services (911).
- In all cases, prevent further heat loss; seek shelter from wind and cold, move to warm, dry environment if possible.
- Gently change wet clothing and provide warmth (dry jackets, blankets, etc.). Warm the body's core first.
- DO NOT rub extremities, avoid rough handling.

### Fainting

- If you see an individual fainting, aid individual to a sitting, then lying position - on left side with left arm under head and left leg bent to keep person in position.
- If unobserved, do NOT move person in any way - check to be sure they can breathe, contact 911 and protect from harm.

- If individual cannot breathe, use a jaw thrust maneuver to open the airway, otherwise, avoid moving neck or spine in case of injury.
- Seek professional medical help.

### **Insect Stings**

- If the stinger remains, scrape it off with the side of a license or credit card.
- Do not try to squeeze the stinger out.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply an ice pack or cold cloth.
- If breathing is difficult, or if you know the individual is allergic to insect stings, get professional medical help immediately. Call 911.

### **Fractured Limb**

- If the injured limb is deformed or swollen, this usually means there is a fracture! Do not move the limb. Protect the patient from further injury, but do not move unless absolutely necessary.
- Get professional medical help immediately. Call 911.
- Do not give the injured person anything to eat or drink.

### **Minor Cuts**

- Wash out minor cuts with soap and water, then cover with a bandage. If cut is deep, cover it with a clean cloth. Press down on the cut and keep the pressure steady until the bleeding stops. If it doesn't stop, call 911.

### **Nosebleed**

- Sit down and lean slightly forward to keep the blood from going down throat.
- Take a clean cloth and place it over the bridge of the nose.
- Squeeze firmly on both sides of the soft portion of the nose for 10 minutes.
- Keep the pressure steady. If the bleeding doesn't stop, get professional medical help.

### **Minor Burns**

- Apply cool water immediately to relieve pain.
- If the burn covers a large area or blisters appear, get professional medical attention.

### **Tooth Knocked Out**

- If dirty, rinse tooth gently, but do not scrub and do not disturb any tissue that may be attached.
- If possible, try to insert the tooth into the socket.
- If not, immerse the tooth in cold, whole milk or use tooth saver.
- Get professional dental help immediately.

### **Blisters**

- Do not pop or cut dead skin away.
- Apply "moleskin" or "new skin" or "Blister bandage" to blister.

### **Sprains**

- Pressure-wrap ankle, knee, wrist or elbow (if trained to do so).
- Apply ice or cold pack, elevate.
- Recommend evaluation by medical professional.

## Wind Knocked Out

- Have person assume position of comfort, sitting or lying down.
- Encourage slow, relaxed breathing.
- Try to reduce anxiety.

## HEAT RELATED ILLNESS (HRI)

There are 3 main types of HRI: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

- When the body cannot cool itself, the body temperature can rise rapidly risking damage to the brain and other vital organs.
- Anyone can experience HRI and untreated, HRI can cause death.
- Several factors can make someone susceptible to HRI in hot weather: previous HRI, high humidity, sunburn, dehydration, poor circulation, illness, drugs and medications.

### Heat Cramps

- Heat cramps are muscle pain or spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs after strenuous activity.
- Sweating depletes the body of salt and moisture. Low salt levels in muscles can cause the cramps. Electrolyte replacement drinks can help alleviate cramping.

### Heat Exhaustion

- Symptoms may include headache, feeling faint or dizzy, nausea, fatigue, heat cramps. Individual feels cool, clammy and damp to touch.
- Move to cool area and shield from sun or heat. If alert, give small sips of cool liquids.
- Loosen restrictive clothing, apply cool cloth to skin or spray with cool water/mist. Immerse in cool/ice water or apply ice to neck, armpit & groin areas.

### Heat Stroke

- Individual feels hot and dry to touch, may no longer perspire.
- If body temperature rises above 102 degrees, fainting, confusion or seizures can occur.
- Summon professional medical help immediately and follow procedures to cool the person rapidly including immersion in ice water or applying ice to neck, armpit and groin areas.
- A medical clearance should be required before returning to any type of exercise after HRI.

# CONCUSSIONS

The following information comes from the Heads Up on Concussions in Youth Sports Program published by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on their website.

## What is a concussion?

A concussion often occurs when a blow to the head or body causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Concussions can result from a fall or players colliding with each other or objects such as a goalpost. Even a mild bump or blow can be serious.

The facts:

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

## Recognizing a Possible Concussion

Coaches and parents should watch for two things among athletes:

- A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
- Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking or physical functioning.



**AYSO strongly recommends that all parents and players review the AYSO/CDC Concussion Information Sheet available on [www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org) in the Region Toolkit.**

## Signs and Symptoms

Signs observed by coaches/parents:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

## Symptoms reported by athletes:

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

### Concussion Danger Signs

An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body, he or she exhibits any of the following danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and won't go away
- Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech, convulsions or seizures
- Unusual behavior, confusion, restlessness or agitation
- Loss of consciousness

**Coaches and Referees should refer to the AYSO/CDC Coach/Referee Action Plan.**

### What should be done when a concussion is suspected?

1. **Remove the athlete from play.**
2. **Look for signs and symptoms.** Athletes who show signs or symptoms of a concussion must not be allowed to return to play for the remainder of the day. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
3. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury. Record the following information to pass on to the parents/guardians or the health care provider:
  - a. Cause of the injury and force of the blow to the head
  - b. Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and for how long
  - c. Any memory loss immediately following the injury
  - d. Any seizures immediately following the injury
  - e. Number of previous concussions (if any)
4. **Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion.** Make sure they know what happened to cause the injury and the symptoms that were observed following it. Urge them to seek medical care, ideally from a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Give them a copy of the AYSO/CDC Information Sheet.
5. Keep the player out of play for the remainder of the day of injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's ok to return to play.
6. Submit an AYSO Incident Report, copy of the Player Registration Form, signed copies of the Participation Release, Concussion Medical Release to the Regional Safety Director.
7. Coaches should consult the CDC's Heads Up Program site for recommendations on Return to Play protocols. Players should provide coaches with medical recommendations for return to play once approved to participate.



**Before a player can return to play, a Participation Release Form is required any time a player is removed from play for sign/symptoms of a possible concussion and anytime a player has to seek emergency room treatment or a physician office visit for an injury or illness affecting the player's readiness to participate.**

**Many states have passed legislation requiring a medical release before a player who may have suffered a concussion is allowed to return to play. In states with this requirement, the medical release must accompany the signed Participation Release. These signed forms, including the signed Player Registration Form, a signed Concussion Information Sheet and the Incident Report must be forwarded to the Region's Safety Director and then forwarded on to the National Office.**

AYSO recommends that all coaches, referees, board and staff members take the CDC's Concussion Awareness Training available online at [www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org). Many States have also legislated concussion awareness training. For specific state requirements, please consult the State Concussion Matrix on [www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org).

# HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs or symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

### SIGNS OBSERVED

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

### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

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

### SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS

- One pupil larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and won't go away
- Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Unusual behavior, confusion, restlessness or agitation
- Loss of consciousness

## COACH ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the CDC fact sheet for parents on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

## ADDITIONAL AYSO COACH PROCEDURES

5. Submit AYSO Incident Report to Safety Director
6. Refer parents to the AYSO/CDC Information sheet and SAI information available at [AYSO.org](http://AYSO.org)
7. Obtain signed AYSO Participation Release from Parent/Guardian prior to return to play
8. Obtain a Medical Release if required by State Law
9. Give all signed forms to your AYSO Safety Director

## AYSO REFEREE ACTION PLAN

During a game, if there is any reason to suspect a concussion:

1. Whistle to stop play immediately.
2. Call the coach onto the field.
3. If safe, have the player leave the field to be checked for signs/symptoms. If any sign/symptoms are observed, the player must not play for the remainder of the day.
4. If signs/symptoms are observed after the player returns to play, remove player from the game.
5. File a supplemental game report of the incident with the appropriate AYSO authority.

**REMEMBER, WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.**

For more information and to order additional materials free-of-charge, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion)

# PARENT/ATHLETE CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

## Parent/Athlete Concussion Information Sheet



A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by 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 or blow to the head can be serious.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

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

#### 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.

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.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETES
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness ( <i>even briefly</i> )	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall	Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

### 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 to the head or body 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
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (*even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously*)

### 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.*

#### 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.

### 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. For more information on concussions, visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion)**

Student-Athlete Name Printed

Student-Athlete Signature

Date

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date

## DEALING WITH BLOOD-BORNE DISEASES

The possibility of contracting a blood-borne disease such as AIDS or Hepatitis-B through athletic activity is minimal at best, according to the American Red Cross, Centers for Disease Control and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. But minimal does not mean non-existent. When dealing with young players, you also have to deal with parents who may not know the minimal risk. For safety and for peace of mind, know the risks and the precautions to minimize them further.

### How minimal?

When people talk about blood-borne diseases, AIDS immediately comes to mind, especially when talking about athletic activities. But the disease experts listed above say the risk of contracting AIDS through casual contact or athletic activity is almost non-existent. These sources say the AIDS virus is very weak and does not survive well outside the body. It is easily killed by many common disinfectants. They further say the virus cannot be spread through everyday activities such as eating in restaurants, swimming in public pools, shaking hands, hugging or other casual contact; it cannot be spread by sharing meals or bathrooms; and not one case of AIDS is known to have been transmitted in a school, day care or foster care setting. There also has not been a documented case of an athlete being infected with AIDS by another athlete as a result of athletic competition. However, in an editorial in the American Journal of Sports Medicine, Dr. Robert E. Leach, M.D. warns that as the number of infected athletes increases, so does the risk of infection through athletic activity.

### Precautions

While the risk of one athlete infecting another with HIV/AIDS during competition is close to non-existent, there is a remote risk that other blood-borne infectious diseases can be transmitted, according to the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine and the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in the blood as well as in other bodily fluids.

### AYSO Guidelines for Dealing with Blood

- Any player or official who is bleeding must leave the field immediately to receive medical treatment and may not return until the bleeding is stopped and the wound is covered.
- If there is blood on the uniform or clothing, the individual may not return until that portion of the uniform or clothing is replaced or the blood has been neutralized with a disinfectant solution. An effective solution is 1-part bleach to 100-parts water (1 teaspoon bleach to 2 cups of water). The solution is only effective for 24 hours.
- If there is blood on the body, the individual may not return until all blood has been removed from skin surfaces and the contaminated skin has been disinfected. Use appropriate disinfectants or antiseptic products.
- Players, coaches or volunteers with a bleeding or oozing skin condition should cover the wound(s) with an appropriate bandage and refrain from all direct contact with others until the condition heals.

### Cleaning Up a Blood Spill

In the event of a blood spill:

- Clean up the spill immediately or as soon as possible after the spill occurs.
- Use disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment while cleaning spill.
- Wipe up the spill with paper towels or other absorbent material.
- After the area has been wiped up, flood the area with a solution of ¼ cup of liquid chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of fresh water, and allow it to stand for at least 20 minutes.
- Dispose of the contaminated material used to clean up the spill in a labeled biohazard container.

**AYSO NOTE: If a biohazard container is not readily available, best efforts should be used to eliminate the possibility that others might come in contact with such materials. Materials should be placed in a marked red biohazard bag, or at least an intact plastic bag and tied and sealed. This bag should be placed in another bag along with gloves and also tied and sealed. The bag should be marked as containing a biohazard and deposited with appropriate local authority (hospital, doctor's office, emergency medical service, etc.) for disposal.**

# ADDITIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT FOR COACHES

## Understand Procedures for emergency medical conditions

- Coaches should maintain awareness of any pre-existing medical conditions.
- Learn symptoms and appropriate response to special conditions. Be familiar with local emergency procedures.
- Coaches should maintain a written record of all injuries.
- **Coaches must have player registration forms and medical authorization forms on hand at all AYSO and team activities.**



## Recovery/Rehabilitation from Common Sports Injuries

- The coach's role is injury prevention and first aid, not professional treatment or diagnosis.
- Administer only immediate first- aid.
- Use and refer to professional medical care for injuries.
- Allow players to resume active participation in practices/games only after a parent/guardian submits a signed Participation Release Form and a medical release in the event of a possible concussion, for any injury or sickness that required medical care.
- Knowledge of basic CPR and first- aid is strongly recommended.
- Remember the following basic guidelines:
  - RICE – Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation.
  - ABC – Airway, Breathing, Circulation.

# VOLUNTEERING IN AYSO

What does it mean to be an AYSO Volunteer? It means you are entrusted with the Vision of AYSO to provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

The messages we send by our behavior to impressionable young players and volunteers is so important. Young people emulate the behavior of adults at sporting events and develop long lasting attitudes and values based on the behavior modeled by adults in youth sports. Willing or not, we are role models and must do our best to set the proper examples.

AYSO asks volunteers to support the following principles of sport designed to provide children with the maximum benefit from participating in youth sports, ensuring that the AYSO program will enrich the lives of the children who participate.



# AYSO PRINCIPLES OF SPORT

## Help create an environment that can enrich children's lives:

- Athletics should develop the whole child.
- Treat children as individuals and in an age appropriate manner.
- Help develop positive feelings of self-worth.
- Provide honest, positive encouragement.
- Support the AYSO team of officials, coaches, referees and spectators.
- Remember that enjoyment is critical to learning.  
The objective of the game is to win, but the goal is ENJOYMENT!



## Promote the benefits of soccer and sport because soccer:

- Contributes to physical well-being and physical fitness.
- Builds confidence and self-esteem.
- Promotes teamwork
- Fosters cooperation.
- Encourages friendships.

## While performing volunteer duties, remember the reasons kids play sports:

- To have fun!
- To improve skills and to learn new skills.
- To be with friends and make new friends.
- For the excitement of competition.
- To enjoy the success and recognition associated with sport.

## Model and promote good sportsmanship:

- Demonstrate that winning is not the most important thing in sport; that character development is just as important.
- Model how to win and lose graciously.
- Stress playing hard to win (rather than winning itself).
- Instill respect for teammates, opposing teams, coaches and referees
- Encourage good behavior on and off the field and stress that foul or abusive language will not be tolerated.

## Model ethical conduct:

- Maintain self-control and self-discipline at all times.
- Demonstrate respect for athletes, officials, coaches and others.
- Recognize the effect your behavior has on others and be positive, courteous and considerate.
- Understand the Laws of the Game to minimize conflicts and maximize enjoyment.
- Understand that respect and positive regard for others are essential for a quality sports experience.

## Foster a "safe" learning environment:

- Show acceptance, react positively to any mistakes and give everyone encouragement.
- Encourage self-confidence and self-esteem in players and volunteers and model appropriate interactions with others.
- Use a variety of positive instructional methods including specific feedback, encouragement and constructive criticism to help players learn the game and volunteers to learn their roles.
- Emphasize the importance of enjoying practice and games or job duties.
- Coaches should set achievable player and team goals at practices and games which encourage both personal and group goals. Regional Boards should set goals and priorities for the Region.

### **Participate in continuing education:**

Stay updated on the following:

- Rule changes – AYSO, FIFA.
- Equipment improvements.
- Philosophical changes.
- Improved techniques to enhance health, safety and success of players and participants.
- Attend Regional meetings and training courses.
- Maintain records of completed training.

### **Do not tolerate abusive behavior:**

- Document and report any misconduct.
- Regional Boards should address abuses, provide training and awareness, and if necessary, take additional actions under the guidelines of Dispute Resolution and Due Process.
- If bad conduct becomes threatening or violent, contact the AYSO National Office immediately.

# KIDS ZONE

Kids Zone guidelines encourage appropriate sideline behavior – key to promoting a safe, fair, fun, family-friendly environment. Parents and spectators pledge to respect the tenets of Kids Zone. Coaches, Referees, Parents and Players abide by Codes of Conduct.

Spectators agree to respect the following rules on every sideline:

Kids are #1

- Fun, not winning is everything
- Fans only cheer, only coaches coach
- No yelling in anger
- Respect the volunteer referees
- No swearing
- No controlled substances (alcohol, tobacco products or illegal drugs)
- No weapons
- Leave no trash behind
- Set a proper example of good sportsmanship



**Every AYSO venue should be a Kids Zone.**



# CODES OF CONDUCT

AYSO has always encouraged good sportsmanship in its programs. In fact, “Good Sportsmanship” is one of the six philosophies listed in the AYSO National Bylaws. AYSO strongly recommends that its individual Regions promote good sportsmanship through dynamic programs.

## **AYSO Coach Pledge:**

In my words and action, I pledge to:

- Enthusiastically support and practice the AYSO mission to “enrich children’s lives” by embracing our Philosophies of: Everyone Plays, Open Registration, Balanced Teams, Positive Coaching, Good Sportsmanship and Player Development.
- Stay informed about sound principles of coaching and child development.
- Respect the game and know the Laws.
- Emphasize to my players that they must abide by the Laws of the Game at all times.
- Develop a true respect for all referees judgments.
- Develop a team respect for our opponents and each other.
- Ensure a safe environment for my players.
- Never yell at or ridicule a player.
- Always set a good example.
- Remember that soccer is a game and all games should be fun.
- Let the players play without constant instructions or commentary from sidelines.
- Role model good sporting behavior



## **AYSO Referee Pledge:**

In my words and action, I pledge to:

- Always remember that the game is for the players. Player safety and fair play come first.
- Study and learn the Laws of the Game and understand the “spirit” of the Laws. Help fellow referees do the same.
- Encourage and enforce the AYSO philosophies of “Everyone Plays,” “Positive Coaching,” “Good Sportsmanship” and “Player Development.”
- Respect other referees’ decisions, and do not publicly criticize another official.
- Wear the proper uniform and keep it in good condition.
- Maintain good physical condition so you can keep up with the action.
- Stay calm when confronted with emotional reactions from players, coaches and parents.
- Honor accepted game assignments. In an emergency, find a replacement.
- Support good sportsmanship with a kind word to players, coaches and parents of both teams when deserved.
- Always be fair and impartial, avoiding conflicts of interest. Decisions based on personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.
- Honor accepted game assignments. In an emergency, find a replacement.
- Support good sportsmanship with a kind word to players, coaches and parents of both teams when deserved.
- Always be fair and impartial, avoiding conflicts of interest. Decisions based on personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.



## Player's Code

In my words and action, I pledge to:

- Play for the sake of playing a game, not just to please a parent or coach.
- Always give my best effort and work as hard for my teammates as I do for myself.
- Treat all players as I would like to be treated.
- Be a team player.
- Be a good sport and support good plays whether they are made by my team or my opponents.
- Follow by the Laws of the Game.
- Cooperate with and show respect for my coaches, teammates, opponents and the referee.
- Never argue with or complain about referee calls or decisions.
- Control my temper when I feel I have been wronged.
- Not use offensive or abusive language and behavior.
- Remember that the object of the game is to win, but the goal is to enjoy myself and give my best effort.



## AYSO Parent Pledge:

In my words and action, I pledge to:

- Attend and participate in team parent meetings as requested.
- Be on time or early when dropping off or picking up my child for training or games.
- Ensure my child is supported and encouraged by family or loved ones at games.
- Encourage my child to have fun and keep sport in its proper perspective.
- Define winning for my child as doing his/her very best and appreciate Development over Winning.
- Endeavor to understand the Laws (rules) of soccer and support the efforts of referees.
- Honor the game and show respect for all involved including coaches, players, opponents, spectators and referees.
- Applaud and encourage players from both teams and not yell out instructions (as this causes confusion to the players and ultimately hinders development).
- Refrain from making negative comments about the game, coaches, referees or players, especially from the sidelines.
- Encourage others to refrain from negative or abusive sideline behavior.
- As parents, keep the game in perspective for our children (as a pastime, sport, fun, exercise).
- Abide by the tenets of Kids Zone for appropriate sideline behavior and support AYSO's philosophies for enriching children's lives.



Elements of these programs may vary from Region to Region, but all define the conduct of players, coaches, referees and even parents. They explain the fundamentals of good behavior- which is simply showing courtesy and respect for all involved in the game.



**If players, volunteers and parents understand what is expected of them when it comes to good sportsmanship, they will act accordingly. AYSO is proud of its many good sports, but understands that good sportsmanship doesn't just happen. It needs to be taught, encouraged and demonstrated.**



# FORMS

## INCIDENT REPORTING

The purpose of the AYSO Incident Report Form is to capture all pertinent facts and contact information while the information is readily available, whenever there is a serious incident involving AYSO participants, activities, facilities or property.

Incident Report Forms should be completed by any coach, referee or Regional staff member witnessing any serious incident involving, but not limited to:

- Illnesses or injuries requiring medical attention and all possible concussions.
- Threats of bodily harm.
- Fighting whether or not a serious injury occurs.
- Property damage.
- Hospitalization of a participant.
- Law enforcement summoned.
- Service or notification of a pending lawsuit.


**Note: An Incident Report must be completed any time it is possible a player may have suffered a concussion.**

Regional staff, coaches, and referees should submit Incident Report Forms to the Regional Safety Director, who in turn, should call the AYSO National Office Risk Management/Insurance Department at 800-872-2976.

AYSO Incident Report Forms are available on the AYSO website: [www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org).

# AYSO INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Please visit [ayso.org](http://ayso.org) to download and print a standard copy of the AYSO Incident Report Form.

 <b>AYSO INCIDENT REPORT FORM</b>		Complete this form for: 1. Injuries 2. Incident – threats 3. Incident – fighting – any type 4. Property damage 5. Law enforcement summoned	
<b>Coaches:</b> Return completed form to the Regional Commissioner, Area Director, Safety Director or Tournament Director. <b>Region, Area or Tournament Staff:</b> Forward copy of completed form to AYSO, Attn: Risk Mgmt, 12501 1st Ave, Hawthorne, CA 90250.			
<b>AFFECTED PARTY:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Official <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Spectator <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Other Section		Area	Region
Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____		Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address: _____		Birth date: _____ AYSO ID #: _____	
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Telephone: ( ) _____			
Contact email(s): _____			
Does the injured person have other medical insurance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If yes, please provide name of company and policy #)			
Employer Name & Address: _____			
<b>GUARDIAN/PARENT (if affected party is a minor):</b>			
Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____		Telephone Number: ( ) _____	
Address: _____		City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____	
<b>INCIDENT INFO:</b>	Date of Incident: _____	Age Division: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Boys <input type="checkbox"/> Girls Time of Incident: _____ AM / PM
Tournament Name & Location (if applicable): _____			
Team Involved #1: _____		Coach Name: _____ Region #: _____	
Team Involved #2: _____		Coach Name: _____ Region #: _____	
<b>BODY PART INJURED</b>		<b>PRIMARY INJURY</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ankle (L/R) <input type="checkbox"/> Knee (L/R) <input type="checkbox"/> Leg <input type="checkbox"/> Foot <input type="checkbox"/> Toe <input type="checkbox"/> Arm <input type="checkbox"/> Hand	<input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder (L/R) <input type="checkbox"/> Wrist (L/R) <input type="checkbox"/> Finger <input type="checkbox"/> Eye (L/R) <input type="checkbox"/> Ear (L/R) <input type="checkbox"/> Nose <input type="checkbox"/> Head	<input type="checkbox"/> Tooth <input type="checkbox"/> Back <input type="checkbox"/> Neck <input type="checkbox"/> Internal <input type="checkbox"/> No injury <input type="checkbox"/> Nose <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Taped/Supported <input type="checkbox"/> Unsupported Shoes: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>If knee injury, was knee:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Braced/Supported <input type="checkbox"/> Unsupported Knee Pads: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>LOCATION</b>		<b>DISPOSITION</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Before Competition/Event <input type="checkbox"/> During Competition/Event <input type="checkbox"/> After Competition/Event <input type="checkbox"/> Competition Area <input type="checkbox"/> Concession Area <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Lot <input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Off Property <input type="checkbox"/> Bleachers/Stands		<input type="checkbox"/> Not Needed <input type="checkbox"/> Patient Refused <input type="checkbox"/> To Parent <input type="checkbox"/> To Personal Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> To Doctor <input type="checkbox"/> To Hospital/Clinic <input type="checkbox"/> Region Recommended <input type="checkbox"/> Patient/Parent Requested	
<b>INCIDENT</b>		<b>DISPOSITION</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Collision (participant/spectator) <input type="checkbox"/> Collision (with object) <input type="checkbox"/> Collision (participant/participant) <input type="checkbox"/> Collision (participant/spectator) <input type="checkbox"/> Struck by falling/flying object <input type="checkbox"/> Caught in, on, between goal		<input type="checkbox"/> Animal/Insect, biting/sting <input type="checkbox"/> Slip/Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Overexertion <input type="checkbox"/> Assault/Sexual <input type="checkbox"/> Assault/Non Sexual <input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage	
<b>FIELD SURFACE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt <input type="checkbox"/> Grass <input type="checkbox"/> Turf <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor		<b>CLASSIFICATION</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Injury (threat, assault) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Injury or Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Injury or Illness	
<b>POLICE REPORT FILED:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, report number: _____		Officer's Named badge #: _____	
Describe how the incident, injury or property damage occurred: (use the backside or attach a separate sheet if necessary – may attach a copy of the Referee Game Misconduct Report)			
<b>WITNESS INFORMATION - Confidential</b>			
Name: _____		Address: _____	
Telephone Number: _____			
Person/volunteer completing/submitting this form:			
Name: _____		Signature: _____	
Position Title: _____		e-mail address: _____	
Regional Commissioner: print name		Signature: _____	
Date: _____		Date: _____	

Rev 09-17-2010-hr

## PLAYER RELEASE FORM

The AYSO Participation Release Form protects not only AYSO, but more importantly, the participants. Too often injured participants are out playing again before they are physically ready. Players should not participate until they are ready to play again. This form should also be used in cases of major illness (such as hepatitis, pneumonia, etc.) (Form may be downloaded from [www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org)).

Please be advised of the following:

1. Coaches should keep one or more blank forms as part of the materials provided them at the beginning of any season.
2. Tournament directors should be advised to have a supply on hand as well.
3. Completed Participation Release Forms must be turned into the Regional Safety Director, but the coach should keep a copy of the signed form so that it is available in the event anyone might question the participation of the player subsequent to an illness or injury.
4. The form is only required when it is known that the player has had to seek emergency room treatment or a physician office visit for an injury or illness affecting the player's readiness to participate.

**The Player Participation Release Form is required any time a player may have suffered a concussion and was removed from play for the remainder of that day. The form requires parents to confirm that the player has been cleared to return to play. And in states requiring it by law, a medical release signed by the appropriate medical professional must also be attached.**

Although AYSO does not recommend that children walk or bike home alone, the AYSO Player Release Form should be signed any time a parent or guardian would like to authorize their child to leave an AYSO activity and walk, bike or drive home alone. This form authorizes the AYSO coach to release the child to leave on their own or to release the child to the care of another designated adult.

**No player should ever be left alone at an AYSO field. The Player Release form cannot be used to leave a child alone at an AYSO field.**

# AYSO PARTICIPATION RELEASE FORM

Please visit [ayso.org](http://ayso.org) to download and print a standard copy of the AYSO Participation Release Form.



## AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION

National Office | 19750 S.Vermont Ave., Suite 200 | Torrance, CA 90502  
(800) 872-2976 [www.AYSO.org](http://www.AYSO.org)

### AYSO Participation Release

This form is to be completed, signed and dated by the parent or guardian of a player who has suffered an illness or injury that required the care of a physician or a visit to a medical care facility. This form must also be completed for players who were removed from participation as described in the next paragraph. When a player is away at an event or competition, and a parent/guardian is not present, a facsimile copy containing the parent/guardian signature is acceptable. The coach should immediately forward any completed form to the Regional Safety Director.

When it is believed that a player has exhibited signs or symptoms of a concussion such that a coach, parent, guardian or other AYSO volunteer has removed the player from participation in the remainder of a practice or game because the person is concerned that the player may potentially have a concussion, AYSO strongly recommends that the player not return to play and participation in practices or games without evaluation and clearance by a medical professional. When required by State law<sup>1</sup>, the player must be evaluated and cleared for return to play and full participation by an appropriately licensed medical professional who has received training in the evaluation and management of concussions. Some of those states also require documentation of that clearance be signed by that medical professional and that documentation must be provided to AYSO and attached to this form. (Such a Concussion Release form is the second page of this document.) Submission of this Participation Release form will constitute an acknowledgement by the player's parent or guardian: (1) that the player has been evaluated and cleared as required; and (2) that acceptance of this form does not constitute a waiver of these requirements.

Print Player's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that the above named player has been cleared for full participation in AYSO programs without restriction. If required by applicable state law, I have also attached a writing signed by a medical provider authorized to confirm such clearance.

Parent or Guardian Full Name (Print or type) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### This Portion is for Regional Use Only

Region \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by AYSO Regional Safety Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> A list of the states in which these requirements apply is available at <http://www.ayso.org/libraries/Resources/AYSOConcussionStateLawMatrix.pdf> or by calling the Safe Haven department at the AYSO National Office (1-800-USA-AYSO).

# AYSO CONCUSSION RELEASE

Please visit [ayso.org](http://ayso.org) to download and print a standard copy of the AYSO Concussion Release Form.



## AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION

National Office | 19750 S.Vermont Ave., Suite 200 | Torrance, CA 90502  
(800) 872-2976 [www.AYSO.org](http://www.AYSO.org)

### AYSO Concussion Release

This form is to be given to the medical provider of a player who exhibited signs or symptoms of a concussion and was evaluated by a medical professional. It is to be completed in full and signed and dated where indicated upon the player being cleared by a medical professional who has received training in the evaluation and management of concussions. When a player is away at an event or competition, a facsimile copy of the medical professional's signature is acceptable. The coach should immediately forward any completed form to the Regional Safety Director.

Print Player's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that the above named player has been released by me and cleared for full participation to play soccer in the AYSO program without restriction. I further certify that my training as a medical professional included the evaluation and management of concussions.

Print Medical Professional Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Professional Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### This Portion is for Regional Use Only

Region \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by AYSO Regional Safety Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# PLAYER RELEASE - WALK HOME ALONE

Please visit [ayso.org](http://ayso.org) to download and print a standard copy of the AYSO Player General Release Form.



## AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION

### AYSO Player General Release

Dear AYSO Parents:

Once the team coach has assumed charge of the children on his/her team, the coach remains responsible until a duly designated adult has taken charge of each child after a practice or game.

No child shall be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents who are unreasonably late or consistently tardy may be reported to the Regional Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) for action. Each coach may establish a standing policy of where children may be picked up by late parents.

AYSO does not encourage children to walk or ride a bicycle home or to a friend or relative's house. However, we recognize that it may be necessary in some cases.

Neither AYSO nor the coach can be responsible for a child's safety if they do walk or ride home. A parent or guardian assumes full responsibility for the safety of the child once he or she is released from a practice or game. Please note that this also applies in the case of players who are of legal driving age and transport themselves to and from AYSO activities.

If your child will be walking, riding a bicycle or driving themselves home from practice or games, please complete the following information in order for your coach to release them:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Child's Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Parent or Guardian Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Child will be (check one): ☐ Walking ☐ Riding a Bicycle ☐ Driving

☐ One Time (Date): \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Ongoing

☐ Carpooling with: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ One Time (Date): \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Ongoing

## POSITION DESCRIPTIONS - COACH



### Coach



#### Purpose

The AYSO volunteer position of coach is intended to develop in players a positive image of themselves, their teammates, coaches, game officials, and opponents, and provide a good role model for players. Additionally, the coach will develop in his/her players the appropriate soccer skills as recommended in the AYSO coaching manuals.

#### Specific Duties and Responsibilities

The coach is expected to:

1. Attend team organization night with the assistant coach before the season begins;
2. Attend the age appropriate coaching course for training on how to coach or as a refresher on AYSO philosophy;
3. Attend uniform/equipment distribution night prior to a season to receive team uniforms, equipment, and a playing schedule;
4. Conduct appropriate training sessions;
5. Promote the AYSO philosophy;
6. Support the Regional Commissioner;
7. Cooperate with the Regional Coach Administrator on all coaching matters;
8. Support the division (age group) coordinator;
9. Distribute practice and game schedules to parents;
10. Conduct a parent meeting;
11. Teach age appropriate skills;
12. Follow Safe Haven guidelines and principles;
13. Provide player evaluations to the division coordinators at the end of the season;
14. Carry out other team tasks as necessary; and
15. Have FUN!

#### Qualifications and Desired Skills

To be considered for the position of coach, the applicant must:

1. Annually submit an AYSO Volunteer Application form;
2. Pass the AYSO screening and background check;
3. Be annually approved and duly appointed as Coach by the Region;
4. Demonstrate good character and reliability;
5. The coach must be 18 years of age or older;
6. Be interested in promoting the benefits of youth sports, especially soccer; and
7. Attend training classes before the season begins.

#### Supervision Protocols

While performing as the coach, the volunteer is:

1. Subject to the bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines of AYSO;

2. Under the overall authority of and directly supervised by the Regional Coach Administrator, and supervised indirectly by the Regional Commissioner;
3. To maintain the recommended adult to child supervision ratio of 1:8 or less; that is one adult for every eight or fewer children and two adults (one of whom may be the coach and one of whom should be of the same gender as the group) present at all times. For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities; and
4. Once the head coach has assumed charge of the children on his or her team, he or she remains responsible until a duly designated adult has taken charge of each child after practice or a game or the child leaves the immediate vicinity of the practice or game as prearranged by the parent to walk home or to a friend's or relative's house. No child shall be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents who are unreasonably late or consistently tardy should be reported to the child protection advocate for action. Each coach may establish a standing policy of where children may be picked up by late parents.

#### **Time Commitment**

The anticipated time commitment for a coach is a full year. The estimated hours to fulfill duties are approximately six hours per week during the season.

#### **Orientation, Training, Certification, and Continued Education Provided**

To prepare a volunteer for the position of coach, AYSO will offer the following educational opportunities which volunteer coaches are expected to take advantage of and participate in, as appropriate.

1. Orientation by the head coach;
2. AYSO Safe Haven Certification;
3. Training classes and continuing education;
4. Coach clinics;
5. Referee clinics; and
6. Annual coach update.

#### **Activity Locations**

While performing the duties of coach, the volunteer is limited to the following locations, unless expressly authorized in writing by the regional commissioner to hold activities in another location.

1. Assigned field locations;
2. Regional meetings and sponsored events;
3. The annual Section Conferences; and
4. Independent work at home alone, in committees of adults, or in a properly supervised situation with children.

## POSITION DESCRIPTIONS - ASSISTANT COACH



### Assistant Coach

#### Purpose

The AYSO volunteer position of assistant coach is intended to help the head coach with all coaching responsibilities.

#### Specific Duties and Responsibilities

The assistant coach is expected to:

1. Attend team organization night with the head coach before the season begins;
2. Attend the age appropriate coach clinic for training on how to coach or as a refresher on AYSO philosophy;
3. Follow AYSO Safe Haven guidelines and principles;
4. Represent the head coach at the uniform and equipment distribution night prior to a season to receive team uniforms, equipment, and playing schedule if head coach is unable to attend;
5. Help run one to two training sessions per week, develop team line-ups for games, and attend regular and tournament games;
6. Provide leadership and be an active role model exemplifying the AYSO culture and philosophies;
7. Provide player evaluations to the division coordinators at the end of the season; and
8. Carry out other team tasks as necessary upon request of the head coach.

#### Qualifications and Desired Skills

To be considered for the position of assistant coach, the applicant must:

1. Annually submit an AYSO Volunteer Application;
2. Pass the AYSO screening and background check;
3. Be annually approved and duly appointed as Assistant by the Region;
4. Demonstrate good character and reliability;
5. Be 18 years of age or older;
6. Be interested in promoting the benefits of youth sports, especially soccer; and
7. Attend training classes in coaching before the season begins.

#### Supervision Protocols

While performing as the assistant coach, the volunteer is:

1. Subject to the bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines of AYSO;
2. Under the overall authority of and directly supervised by the head coach, and supervised indirectly by the regional coach administrator;

3. To maintain the recommended adult to child supervision ratio of 1:8 or less; that is one adult for every eight or fewer children and two adults (one of whom may be the coach and one of whom should be of the same gender as the group) present at all times. For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities; and
4. Once the head coach has assumed charge of the children on his or her team, he or she remains responsible until a duly designated adult has taken charge of each child after practice or a game or the child leaves the immediate vicinity of the practice or game as prearranged by the parent to walk home or to a friend's or relative's house. No child shall be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents who are unreasonably late or consistently tardy should be reported to the child protection advocate for action. Each coach may establish a standing policy of where children may be picked up by late parents

#### **Time Commitment**

The anticipated time commitment for an assistant coach is a full year. The estimated hours to fulfill duties are approximately four hours per week during the season.

#### **Orientation, Training, Certification, and Continued Education Provided**

To prepare a volunteer for the position of assistant coach, AYSO will offer the following educational opportunities which volunteer coaches are expected to take advantage of and participate in, as appropriate.

1. Orientation by the head coach;
2. AYSO Safe Haven Certification;
3. Training classes;
4. Coach clinics;
5. Referee clinics; and
6. Annual coach update.

#### **Activity Locations**

While performing the duties of assistant coach, the volunteer is limited to the following locations, unless expressly authorized in writing by the Regional Commissioner to hold activities in another location.

1. Assigned field locations;
2. Regional meetings and sponsored events;
3. The annual Section Conferences; and
4. Independent work at home alone, in committees of adults, or in a properly supervised situation with children.

## POSITION DESCRIPTIONS - REFEREE



### Referee

#### Purpose

The AYSO volunteer position of referee is intended to manage soccer matches played between teams of youth players in the age groups from U-5 to U-19 according to the AYSO National Rules and Regulations, the FIFA Laws of the Game and the training curriculum as specified in the AYSO National Referee Program. The referee is expected to cooperate with coaches and other officials to develop a positive self-image in the players and to provide a good role model for all AYSO participants.

#### Specific Duties and Responsibilities

The referee is expected to:

1. Support the AYSO National Referee Program in both specifics and spirit;
2. Attend Regional referee meetings before and during the season as required;
3. Attend specific referee training courses to develop refereeing skills;
4. Attend referee refresher courses (continuing education training) as necessary to maintain AYSO rules, the FIFA Law knowledge, and to become familiar with changes;
5. Officiate matches to which he/she is assigned according to the AYSO rules, the FIFA Laws and prevailing guidelines;
6. Keep a record of each match he/she officiates and make special reports as necessary;
7. Support the AYSO philosophies;
8. Follow AYSO Safe Haven guidelines and principles;
9. Support the Regional Commissioner and staff;
10. Cooperate with the Regional Referee Administrator and referee staff on issues pertaining to refereeing;
11. Present a healthy environment and model by refraining from consuming alcoholic beverages or using tobacco products in the immediate vicinity of the soccer fields; and
12. Carry out any other refereeing tasks as necessary.

#### Qualifications and Desired Skills

To be considered for the position of referee, the applicant must:

1. Annually submit an AYSO Volunteer Application Form;
2. Pass the AYSO screening and background check;
3. Be annually approved and duly appointed as Referee by the Region;
4. Complete AYSO Referee and Safe Haven certification;

5. Demonstrate good character and reliability;
6. Be interested in promoting the benefits of youth sports, especially soccer; and
7. Be physically capable.

### **Supervision Protocols**

While performing as the referee, the volunteer is:

1. Subject to the bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines of AYSO;
2. Under the overall authority of and directly supervised by The Regional Referee Administrator, and supervised indirectly by the Regional Commissioner; and
3. To maintain the recommended adult to child supervision ratio of 1:8 or less; that is one adult for every eight or fewer children and two adults (one of whom may be the coach and one of whom should be of the same gender as the group) present at all times. For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.

### **Time Commitment**

The anticipated time commitment for a referee is a full year. The estimated hours to fulfill duties by month shall be filled in by the Regional Referee Administrator:

### **Orientation, Training, Certification and Continued Education Provided**

To prepare a volunteer for the position of referee, AYSO will offer the following referee educational opportunities that volunteer referees are expected to take advantage of and participate in, as appropriate.

1. Orientation by the Regional Referee Administrator;
2. AYSO's Safe Haven Certification;
3. Various referee track workshops at the annual Section Conferences;
4. Referee training classes: U-8 official, assistant referee, basic referee, intermediate referee, advanced referee, and national referee;
5. Referee Advisor/Assessor training;
6. FIFA Law and AYSO national rules and regulations update and refresher courses; and
7. Annual Referee Update.

### **Activity Locations**

While performing the duties of referee, the volunteer is limited to the following locations, unless expressly authorized in writing by the regional commissioner to hold activities in another location.

1. Assigned field locations;
2. Regional meetings and sponsored events;
3. Section Conferences;
4. Tournaments; and
5. Independent work at home alone, in committees of adults, or in a properly supervised situation with children.

# POSITION DESCRIPTIONS - TEAM PARENT



## Team Parent

### Purpose

The AYSO volunteer position of Team Parent is intended to carry out duties as directed by the Team Parent Coordinator.

### Specific Duties and Responsibilities

The Team Parent is expected to:

1. Distribute information to the coaches, players and player families through the individual player parents including kids zone parent pledges, stickers and sideline tenet reminders; and
2. Assist Team Parent Coordinator with the distribution of team and individual photos, fundraising materials and awards or certificates to individual players.

### Qualifications and Desired Skills

To be considered for the position of Team Parent, the applicant must:

1. Annually submit an AYSO Volunteer Application form;
2. Pass the AYSO screening and background check;
3. Be annually approved and duly appointed as a Team Parent by the Region;
4. Be a good communicator; and
5. Be reliable, organized and detailed oriented

### Supervision Protocols

While performing as the Team Parent, the volunteer is:

1. Subject to the bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines of AYSO;
2. Under the overall authority of and directly supervised by the Regional Commissioner; and
3. To maintain the recommended adult to child supervision ratio of 1:8 or less; that is one adult for every eight or fewer children and two adults (one of whom may be the coach and one of whom should be of the same gender as the group) present at all times. For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.

### **Time Commitment**

Time commitment will vary depending on Region size and length of playing season(s). For the typical AYSO Region, the Team Parent will devote about 8-10 hours per week during the season.

### **Orientation, Training, Certification, and Continued Education Provided**

To fully prepare for the position, the Team Parent is expected to participate in the following training, certification and continuing educational opportunities:

1. Orientation by the Team Parent Coordinator – 1 ½ hours.
2. AYSO's Safe Haven – 2 hours.
3. Appropriate Management Workshops.

### **Activity Locations**

While performing the duties of Team Parent, the volunteer is limited to the following locations, unless expressly authorized in writing by the Regional Commissioner to hold or participate in activities in another location.

1. Regularly scheduled and duly approved inside or outside AYSO activities; and
2. Independent work at home alone, in committees of adults, or in a properly supervised situation with children.

# CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of this manual, we hope that you have a greater understanding of the goals and objectives of the Safe Haven program and its importance in promoting a fun, fair, and safe family environment for children to enjoy and experience soccer. Please follow through with your commitment to these goals by completing the required certification and job training.

**Check [www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org) for online training courses or contact your Area Director for upcoming training events.**

If there are any questions, concerns or issues that you, your Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) or your Regional Commissioner would like assistance with, please contact the AYSO National Office:

AYSO NATIONAL OFFICE  
(800) USA-AYSO or (800) 872-2976  
[www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org)  
email: [safehaven@ayso.org](mailto:safehaven@ayso.org)

Be sure to check the CVPA and Safe Haven web pages on the AYSO website for FAQs, updates and other valuable resources.

AYSO would like to take this opportunity to thank you for volunteering your time and for helping to fulfill the vision of providing world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives. You are one of over 200,000 who volunteer annually to serve the children of AYSO and whose dedication and commitment make it all possible. Thank you!

# AYSO SAFE HAVEN CERTIFICATION TEST

1. **The Safe Haven Certification Program was developed by AYSO to provide protection for both the children and for:**
  - a) AYSO Coaches
  - b) AYSO Parents
  - c) AYSO Referees
  - d) AYSO Volunteers
2. **AYSO has 6 core philosophies including: Everyone Plays, Balanced Teams, Open Registration, Positive Coaching and Good Sportsmanship. Which of the following completes the list?**
  - a) Everyone Volunteers.
  - b) Player Development.
  - c) Character Counts.
  - d) Equal Opportunity.
3. **The AYSO definition of “Everyone Plays” is:**
  - a) Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.
  - b) Our program’s goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.
  - c) Our program is open to all children who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.
  - d) Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.
4. **The AYSO definition of “Player Development” is:**
  - a) We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.
  - b) Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.
  - c) Our program’s goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game
  - d) We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as a member of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game.
5. **Which of the following statements most accurately describes the AYSO requirements regarding the Volunteer Application Form?**
  - a) A fully completed and signed AYSO volunteer application form need only be submitted once.
  - b) All AYSO volunteers must complete, sign and submit a Volunteer Application Form each year.
  - c) Only new volunteers or previous AYSO volunteers who have been inactive for one or more seasons are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form.
  - d) Completing the AYSO Volunteer Application Form is optional.
6. **Which of the following statements most accurately describes the AYSO requirements regarding coaches, referees and other volunteers?**
  - a) All AYSO volunteers are required to complete Safe Haven Certification.
  - b) All AYSO volunteers are required to be properly trained in their jobs.
  - c) All AYSO volunteers are required to be authorized to do their job by the appropriate AYSO authority.
  - d) All of the above.

7. **The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides protection for volunteers for which of the following?**
  - a) Immunity for volunteers from certain types of prosecution, including offenses involving alcohol, tobacco products and illegal or prescription-only drugs.
  - b) Immunity from liability for property damage while using public facilities.
  - c) Immunity from liability for injury while transporting players in an automobile.
  - d) Immunity from certain types of prosecution for volunteers who meet its requirements.
8. **According to the AYSO Safe Haven Program, which of the following best defines "Training"?**
  - a) Training is anything a volunteer does to increase their general knowledge.
  - b) Training is the education a volunteer receives to do a specific job or task.
  - c) Training is experience gained through reading about soccer.
  - d) Training is obtained by actually performing the requested job.
9. **According to the AYSO Safe Haven Program, which of the following best defines "Certification"?**
  - a) Certification confirms you know soccer.
  - b) Certification confirms you are good at your job.
  - c) Certification confirms key competencies in a volunteer.
  - d) Certification confirms you know what you should avoid doing.
10. **What is the AYSO Safe Haven recommended minimum supervision ratio of children to adults?**
  - a) 15:1.
  - b) 8:1.
  - c) 18:1.
  - d) 10:1.
11. **The AYSO Safe Haven Supervision Policy states which of the following?**
  - a) At least two adults should be present at all times during AYSO sponsored events.
  - b) No volunteer should be alone with any child or group of children (except for their own children) during AYSO sponsored events.
  - c) At least one adult present should be the same gender as the group during AYSO sponsored events.
  - d) All of the above
12. **In addition to physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and ethical abuse, which of the following is the fifth type of abuse generally recognized by psychologists, legislators and educators around the country?**
  - a) Neglect Abuse.
  - b) Religious Abuse.
  - c) Racial Abuse.
  - d) Ethnic Abuse.

**While the scenarios may present more than one type of abusive behavior, please select the best answer:**

13. **A coach who encourages a player to fake an injury and sit out on the bench (not allowing this player to participate in at least half of the game, as required by AYSO's core philosophies) and substitutes the star player in because "the team needs him or her" is an example of what type of abusive behavior:**
  - a) Emotional Abuse
  - b) Physical Abuse
  - c) Neglect Abuse
  - d) Ethical Abuse
14. **A coach or team members who consistently ignore one player throughout the entire season would be an example of what type of abuse?**
  - a) Emotional Abuse
  - b) Physical Abuse
  - c) Neglect Abuse
  - d) Ethical Abuse

15. **A coach who allows a player to be hit in the arm by each of her teammates because she missed a shot on goal would be an example of what type of abusive behavior?**
  - a) Emotional Abuse
  - b) Physical Abuse
  - c) Ethical Abuse
  - d) Sexual Abuse
16. **A parent who stands on the side lines and throws his hands up in the air, hits his head with the palm of this hand, and throws his water bottle to the ground during the games would be demonstrating what type of abusive behavior?**
  - a) Emotional Abuse
  - b) Physical Abuse
  - c) Neglect Abuse
  - d) Ethical Abuse
17. **A Team Parent who gives sensual massages to players could be demonstrating what type of abusive behavior?**
  - a) Emotional Abuse
  - b) Physical Abuse
  - c) Ethical Abuse
  - d) Sexual Abuse
18. **To protect yourself as a volunteer, which of the following is recommended by the AYSO Safe Haven Program?**
  - a) Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child other than your own, including transporting youngsters in a car.
  - b) When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a place out of earshot but within sight of others for your conference.
  - c) When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.
  - d) All of the above.
19. **Some forms of contact are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate. Which of the following is not acceptable?**
  - a) Slaps on the butt or chest bumping are acceptable for adults to do to players because they are an excepted part of behavior in sports.
  - b) A "High-Five" hand slap, congratulating players for a job well done.
  - c) A hug from the side in the open, not in private.
  - d) A brief, quick hug over the shoulders, with the child's permission.
20. **During a lightning storm, it is advisable to:**
  - a) Seek shelter under a tree
  - b) Gather in an open area near a concession stand
  - c) Take shelter in an enclosed car with the windows closed
  - d) Continue with the game and remain in the bleachers when thunder is heard and no lightning is seen.
21. **When temperatures and humidity rise significantly above normal levels, reasonable safety considerations would include:**
  - a) Allowing more frequent water and substitution stoppages
  - b) Notifying players to hydrate 24 hours in advance of planned activities
  - c) Providing additional shade
  - d) All of the above.
22. **The AYSO Safe Haven Program recommends which of the following when cleaning a blood spill?**
  - a) Clean the spill immediately or as soon as possible after the spill occurs and wear disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment.
  - b) Wipe up the spill with paper towels or other absorbent materials then flood the area for at least 20 minutes with ¼ cup chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water.
  - c) Dispose of the contaminated material used to clean the spill in a labeled biohazard container.
  - d) All of the above.

23. **Which statement is not true concerning concussions?**
  - a) Concussions can occur without a loss of consciousness
  - b) Concussions are serious brain injuries
  - c) As long as the player expresses no signs of pain, it is safe to return to play.
  - d) Players suspected of having a concussion should seek professional medical care.
24. **On a warm day, a player who appears to be fatigued, dizzy, not perspiring and very hot to the touch is probably suffering from a very dangerous condition called:**
  - a) hypothermia
  - b) heat exhaustion
  - c) concussion
  - d) heat stroke
25. **The objective of the game is to win, but the goal for all coaches and volunteers in AYSO should be to:**
  - a) Support the development of the whole child.
  - b) Develop positive feelings of self-worth in each child
  - c) Treat children as individuals
  - d) All the above
26. **Which of the following is not one of the benefits of soccer promoted by AYSO:**
  - a) Contributes to physical fitness and well-being
  - b) Promotes a “win-at-all-costs” attitude
  - c) Encourages friendships
  - d) Promotes teamwork and cooperation
27. **When volunteers demonstrate that winning is not the most important thing in sport but that character development is also an important consideration, this is an example of:**
  - a) Modeling and promoting good sportsmanship
  - b) Modeling ethical conduct
  - c) Developing effective motivational skills
  - d) Participating in continuing education
28. **Referees staying updated on Law changes— (AYSO, FIFA) is an example of:**
  - a) Model ethical conduct
  - b) Develop effective motivational skills
  - c) Participating in continuing education
  - d) Develop sporting behavior in players
29. **Use of Social Media sites and electronic communications are recommended means for improving communications as long as:**
  - a) All communications between adults and minors are transparent and include parents.
  - b) Adults post everything on their public Facebook page.
  - c) Postings on websites and pages protect the privacy and identities of minors
  - d) a) and c)
30. **AYSO's Kids Zone program promotes appropriate sideline behavior including which of the following sideline rules:**
  - a) Cheering loudly, as long as it's positive, to drown out the opposite sideline
  - b) Only coaches can challenge the referees
  - c) Cheering is an important contributor to winning
  - d) Fun, not winning is everything

# CERTIFICATION CARDS



**The American Youth Soccer Organization**  
is pleased to recognize

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for completing the  
**Safe Haven Certification Course**

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Instructor (please print legibly)

Date

Please keep this for your records

Roster#: \_\_\_\_\_



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# AYSO VISION

is to provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

# AYSO MISSION

is to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a fun, family environment based on AYSO's Six Philosophies:

## AYSO SIX PHILOSOPHIES

- Everyone Plays®
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship
- Player Development



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everyone plays®