



Australian Stock Horse  
SOCIETY

## AUSTRALIAN STOCK HORSE SOCIETY

### Concussion Policy

#### PURPOSE

This policy is to assist in safeguarding the health and welfare of riders and volunteers in Australian Stock Horse activities. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and direction to riders, parents, Judges, coaches and administrators.

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#### WHAT IS CONCUSSION

Concussion is a type of brain injury, resulting from an impulsive force to the head or anywhere on the body, which transmits an impulsive force to the head. e.g. landing heavily on their feet or coccyx where the impulse is transferred to the head.

Concussion is not always as a result of head knocks. Concussion can also occur as a result of rapid acceleration-deceleration of the head, such as in whiplash injuries or even landing heavily on your feet.

Concussion is a subset of mild traumatic brain injury that is at the less severe end of the brain injury spectrum. Relatively minor knocks to the head can result in concussion. Concussion commonly causes short term neurological symptoms which may become apparent over the hours or days following the injury.

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#### SIGNS OF CONCUSSION

There may be obvious signs of concussion such as loss of consciousness, brief convulsions or difficulty balancing or walking. Onlookers should suspect concussion when an injury results in a knock to the head or body that transmits a force to the head. A hard knock is not required, concussion can occur from minor knocks.

More subtle signs and symptoms of concussion include;

- headache
- sensitivity to noise or light
- confusion
- drowsiness
- sadness or irritability
- amnesia
- dizziness
- blurred vision
- nausea or vomiting
- sense of pressure in the head
- feeling 'in a fog'
- neck pain

## **EFFECTS OF CONCUSSION**

Children aged under 18 years may be more susceptible to concussion and take longer to recover. Concussion may affect the ability to learn at school.

There is also growing concern about potential long-term consequences of multiple concussions.

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## **REQUIRED ACTION UNDER THIS POLICY**

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Committees should ensure that the appropriate level of First Aid is provided at all ASHS events - please refer to the ASHS First Aid Matrix.

A First Aid Officer should be appointed for all Australian Stock Horse Society events. The First Aid person should be made aware of the Society's Concussion Policy to assist in evaluating persons who are suspected of sustaining a concussion.

The plan for all events should include the means to immediately contact emergency services by telephone.

### **CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT**

Any person who suffers a blow to the head or who has landed heavily on the ground should be suspected of having a concussion and should be screened. They should not be left alone following the injury and serial monitoring is essential over the first few hours following the incident.

If there are any grounds for suspicion that concussion has occurred, a person is not permitted to remount and continue riding or competing or handling horses. The only exception is if the rider has undergone a medical assessment and written consent to continue riding that day is provided by a medical practitioner or paramedic

Parents have no right to over-ride the decision of the First Aid Officer/medical practitioner.

Any person with diagnosed concussion is not permitted to ride, compete or volunteer at Australian Stock Horse Society events for a minimum period of 21 days, and must be symptom free for the preceding 48 hours.

People can have a mandatory suspension removed by providing a certificate from a Medical Practitioner stating that full recovery has occurred.

People diagnosed with concussion should have physical and mental rest until the acute symptoms resolve and then a gradual, stepwise program of increasing activity and medical clearance.

The event organiser must complete an Incident Report and submit promptly to the Australian Stock Horse Society head office.

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## **POLICY REVIEW**

The Australian Stock Horse Society will review and update this policy from time to time and ensure that it complies with current policy and practice for junior and equestrian sport. The revised policy will be posted on the ASHS website.

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Effective – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021