

## Northern Freestyle Karate Association



### Health and Safety Policy, including head injuries and concussion protocol.

Full refresh and taken to Management Committee	Feb 2026	Robin Harper-Coulson
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## **General Policy Statement**

1. The Instructors Committee of the NFKA regards the promotion of Health and Safety measures as a mutual objective of instructors and members at every level, and will support all those who endeavour to carry it out.

2. It is therefore this organisations policy to do all that is reasonable to prevent personal injury and damage to property and protect everyone including the public, from foreseeable hazards, in so far as they come into contact with the organisation and its activities.

3. In particular the NFKA recognises a responsibility:

- (a) To provide and maintain a safe and healthy level of instruction.
- (b) To provide appropriate training and instructors, so far as is reasonably practical, to enable members to practise safely and efficiently.
- (c) To encourage the use of all necessary protective equipment and to supervise their use.
- (d) To maintain a constant and continuing interest in health and safety matters applicable to this organisations activities.

4. Members have a duty to co-operate in the operation of this policy:

- (a) By encouraging safe practices.
- (b) By using protective equipment when required.
- (c) By reporting incidents that have led, or may lead to injury or damage.
- (d) By adhering to NFKA procedures agreed on their behalf for securing a safe environment.
- (e) By assisting in the investigation of any incident with the object of introducing measures to prevent recurrence.

## **General Responsibilities for Health & Safety**

It shall be the duty of every member to ensure that they have familiarised themselves with the contents of this policy and shall include:

1. Familiarising themselves with the premises in use, noting:

- a) All exit routes
- b) First aid facilities
- c) Fire extinguishers
- d) Toilets and changing rooms
- e) Notice boards
- f) Rules and regulations
- g) Telephones
- h) Nearest casualty hospital

2. Members and visitors to the premises shall observe the NFKA's Health and Safety rules, and any instruction/ advice given by the individuals responsible for the club/ premises or any member legitimately so entitled.

## **Responsibilities of Members**

It shall be the legal duty of every member/visitor whilst at the premises:

- (a) To take reasonable care of Health and Safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by his/hers acts or omissions at the premises.
- (b) To co-operate so far as is necessary with regard to any duty requirement imposed upon the instructor or any other persons by or under any statutory provisions, to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or fulfilled.
- (c) To make themselves familiar with the NFKA's Health and Safety policy at all times.

## **Responsibilities of Instructors / Persons in Charge**

They shall:

- a) Familiarise themselves with the NFKA's safety policy and enforce it at all times.
- b) Monitor any suggestions or complaints from members or instructors on the subject of safety, and take action where practicable.
- c) Investigate all accidents and dangerous practices, in conjunction with any person so authorised, and report accordingly.
- d) Ensure that a record is maintained of all injuries. Such record to be produced as and when required.
- e) Be directly responsible for the running of club/s under their control.
- f) Provide adequate supervision of all members, particularly monitoring young or inexperienced members and/or instructors.
- g) Take any action necessary to ensure that legal safety obligations have been carried out by the owners/authority in charge of the premises, i.e., safety fire-check etc.
- h) Ensure that any training or safety equipment being used is in a safe, clean and serviceable condition.

- i) Ensure that any prospective instructor receives appropriate training as provided by the NFKA and that only authorised persons are placed in a position of supervision of others.
- j) Introduce control measures where necessary, to reduce hazards.
- k) Ensure that all persons acting on their behalf comply with this and all other Health and Safety regulations.
- l) Ensure that all persons comply with any directives relative to insurance indemnities.

## **Management Committee**

Shall:-

- a) Advise the members of any standards of safety.
- b) Have representation on any meetings on Health and Safety.
- c) Provide and maintain all Health and Safety policy documentation.
- d) Seek to provide information and training concerning Health and Safety.
- e) Ensure that all instructors are provided with an opportunity to undergo training for coaching and Health and Safety.
- f) Seek advice from the Central Council for Physical Recreation, The Sports Council and other bodies able to provide instruction or guidance.

## **Personal Safety Equipment**

A wide range of personal protective equipment is available to all martial artists for the Health and Safety of not only the wearer, but also any other persons engaged in activities with them.

The range of equipment varies with martial arts disciplines and the rules of combat. The instructor will advise.

The following are available:

- a) Head-guard. Of suitable material; secure-fitting and protected all round
- b) Gum-shield. These should be individually fitted
- c) Chest protector for women
- d) Forearm protector
- e) Hand sparring equipment not bag gloves or mitts
- f) Groin Box
- g) Shin protector
- h) Boot/instep protector

Safety equipment should be worn during all contact activities where injury could result. Such equipment will usually be determined by national or international rules and regulations.

For personal hygiene and efficiency, borrowing and lending of equipment is not to be encouraged. All members should obtain their own personal items of safety equipment.

Any refusal or non-compliance with any reasonable request to wear adequate safety equipment MUST result in the exclusion of the individual concerned, from any activity requiring such protection, for the health and safety of themselves and others.

## **First Aid**

Under the Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981, premises must have first aid provision.

At least one first aid box should be kept on each of the premises used or occupied by the club/s. Where applicable a qualified first aider or responsible person shall be expected to maintain the box.

A 'Responsible' or 'Appointed person' is someone who is authorised or expected to take charge of a serious situation (e.g., to call an ambulance) if there is a serious illness or injury. The person will act in the absence of the trained or qualified first aider, or where a qualified first aider is not required.

All instructors must be a qualified first aider and must have undertaken training and obtained qualifications.

Emergency first aid training should be considered for all appointed persons.

A record (Accident book) must be maintained in conjunction with the first aid box.

Members should be made aware of any activity that might be potentially dangerous, and any exclusions to their personal indemnity as a result of such practices.

## **First Aid Special Precautions**

1. In any situation requiring first aid, certain precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of transmitting infections, including AIDS and hepatitis.
2. First aiders should always cover any exposed cuts or abrasions they may have with a waterproof dressing before treating a casualty whether or not any infection is suspected.
3. They should also wash their hands both before and after applying dressings
4. Whenever blood, semen, or other body fluids have to be mopped up, disposable plastic gloves should always be worn and paper towels used, these items should then be placed in plastic bags and safely disposed of, preferably by burning. Clothing may be cleaned in an ordinary washing machine using the hot cycle. The AIDS virus is killed by household bleach and the area in which any spills have occurred should be disinfected using one part bleach diluted with 10 parts water, caution should be exercised as bleach is corrosive and can be harmful to the skin.
5. If direct contact with another person's blood or other body fluids occurs, the area should be washed as soon as possible with ordinary soap and water. Clean cold tap water should be used if the lips, mouth, tongue, eyes or broken skin are affected and medical advice sought.
6. First aiders who may be called upon to give mouth to mouth resuscitation should be aware that mouthpieces are available for this procedure for specially trained persons. Such treatment should NEVER be withheld in an emergency if a mouth piece is not available. No case of infection has been reported from any part of the world as a result of giving mouth to mouth resuscitation.

## **Head injury precautions**

Blows to the head during club training sessions and tournaments are something which everyone would wish to avoid, but as we all know this is sometimes unavoidable. The way these head injuries are handled could however be vital to the long-term welfare of the casualty and the purpose of this document is to assist and to clarify the NFKA position.

### **What is Concussion?**

Concussion is a disturbance of the function of nerve cells in the brain as a result of a blow to the skull. This means that parts of the brain's functions are temporarily confused. The symptoms may include temporary unconsciousness,

confusion, headache and often a loss of memory concerning the critical incident. Vomiting and nausea are also common. All blows to the head may be dangerous. An uncomplicated concussion is not dangerous in itself the brain simply needs time to return to normal but complications can arise in severe cases, which is why all blows to the head must be dealt with correctly and the following guidelines are designed to assist you with that care.

### **Blows to head during tournaments.**

The NFKA provides First Aid Assistance at all its tournaments where fighting takes place. This first aid cover is provided by trained personnel and when necessary, ambulance cover is also provided.

All head injuries are seen by the medical team when advice and treatment can be given and if necessary, transport to hospital is available.

During club and squad session's treatment for head injury and any other injury becomes the responsibility of the lead instructor or instructor in charge and it is vital that any treatment given is in line with current protocols.

### **Blows to the head during club / squad sessions**

It is firstly important to ensure that a First Aider is on hand at all sessions with a well-stocked first aid kit and accident book. The NFKA offer first aid courses on a regular basis and it is vital that lead instructor and instructors ensure that their first aid certificates are current.

### **Recommendations for management of concussion.**

When dealing with head injury always consider possible cervical spine injury (neck). Any neck pain could be an indicator of cervical spinal problems and if in any doubt casualty's head should be held in the current position and an ambulance called via 999.

### **Better to be safe than sorry.**

## **Competition Safety**

In addition to the requirements listed elsewhere in this document: It shall be the duty of all competition organisers and promoters to observe the following requirements:

1. Medical: At all major competitions above club level, a medical doctor must be in attendance in addition to first-aiders and equipment.
2. Floors: Mats or sprung ring-boards for competitions which involve foot-sweeps, throws, takedowns and full-contact.
3. Licences: Every fighter must produce his licence which includes a medical record. Any head injury must be entered and in the case of a concussion, a fighter may not compete for 28 days or until cleared by a doctor.
4. Referees: will make the safety of the fighters the first priority and must stop the contest at any sign of distress or inability to defend.
5. Rules: Only approved sets of rules may be used including:
  - a) World Association of Kickboxing Orgs. (WAKO)

Check with AMA for others.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

It is important to draw the attention of members that the procedure does apply to Health and Safety matters. Failure to observe the rules and guidance in this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken.