



PRE-GAME SAFETY MEETING

A pre-game safety meeting helps ensure an athletic event is conducted safely and in an organized manner. It allows event personnel to establish expectations, review communication procedures, and confirm emergency protocols before competition begins. The meeting also reinforces sportsmanship standards, addresses bench and sideline management, reviews crowd control expectations, and clarifies the roles of those responsible for managing the event. Participants should include game officials, the site administrator or athletic director, head coaches, and, when appropriate, assistant coaches, athletic trainers or medical personnel, and security or event management staff. Bringing these individuals together promotes consistent expectations, accountability, and coordinated decision-making if an issue arises.

The meeting should occur before the event and before team warm-ups, ideally 15 to 30 minutes before the scheduled start time, once key personnel have arrived. This timing allows for final confirmation of safety procedures, emergency response plans, bench control expectations, and sportsmanship standards.

Key topics should include the site's Emergency Action Plan, medical coverage, and the location of emergency equipment such as AEDs and first aid kits, and the nearest emergency access point or hospital. Bench and sideline control expectations, sportsmanship standards, and the chain of command for event management should also be reviewed. Officials should outline communication procedures with coaches and administrators, and any facility or field conditions should be noted. Weather considerations, including procedures for delays or suspensions, should be discussed, along with spectator management expectations and protocols for addressing disruptive behavior.

Reviewing these items before the contest ensures all stakeholders share a clear understanding of safety procedures and operational responsibilities, reducing the likelihood of incidents and supporting an organized response if issues occur.

- **Emergency Action Plan (EAP):** Location-specific procedures for medical emergencies, severe weather, fire, or other threats, including who initiates the response and where injured participants will be treated or transported.
- **Medical Coverage:** Identification and location of the athletic trainer or medical personnel, availability of emergency equipment (AED, spine board, first aid kits), and the nearest hospital or emergency access point.
- **Bench and Sideline Control:** Expectations for coaches and student-athletes regarding remaining in designated areas, preventing bench-clearing incidents, and maintaining proper conduct.
- **Sportsmanship Expectations:** Reinforcement of respectful behavior for coaches, players, and spectators, along with consequences for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- **Game Management Roles:** Identification of the site administrator or event supervisor, security personnel, and chain of command for addressing issues during the event.

- **Officials' Authority and Communication:** How officials will communicate with coaches and administrators during the contest, and procedures for addressing disputes or concerns.
- **Facility and Field Conditions:** Any known hazards, boundary markings, locker room locations, and safe ingress/egress routes.
- **Weather and Environmental Concerns:** Heat, cold, lightning, air quality considerations, and procedures for delays, suspensions, or cancellations.
- **Spectator Management:** Crowd control expectations, restricted areas, and protocols for handling disruptive spectators.

Sharing this information ensures all stakeholders have a shared understanding of safety responsibilities and are prepared to respond effectively to any situation that may arise.