



SAFETY • SERVICE • SAVINGS
A TRUST BUILT FOR STUDENTS

FOOTBALL HELMETS

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

The School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study Group reported there were 72 concussion injuries for every 100,000 players across the nation in 2009-10. While football helmets provide some protection against concussions, their original primary function was to protect against skull fractures. Now that players are faster and stronger, extra care must be given to prevent injuries. The school is responsible to ensure all helmets are in good condition before and during every season to maximize players' protection. Schools should follow these guidelines to ensure helmets are in good condition to offer the most protection possible.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure their helmets are in good condition, schools should:

- Recondition/recertify helmets annually.
- Inspect helmets throughout the season.
- Replace any helmet more than 10 years old. (The National Athletic Equipment Reconditioning Association does not allow helmets older than 10 years to be re-certified/re-conditioned.)

COACH INSPECTIONS

With the helmet on the player, coaches should weekly inspect:

- Chinstraps are centered on the chin, straps are tight and snaps are in good order.
- Forehead padding is one inch above eyebrow.
- Helmet ear openings are aligned with ear canals.
- Facemask is three widths from nose, and checked for chipped paint, loose attachments or denting.
- Rear padding covers the bony prominence of skull.
- Helmet is tight and wrinkles the forehead skin.
- Check side torsion: the nose should remain between the anchoring screws while the player rotates sideways.
- Examine shell for cracks, mounting rivets, screws, snaps, distortion and looseness.
- Replace damaged or worn forehead, rear skull and jaw pads.

PLAYER INSPECTIONS

Players should daily inspect:

- Check pads for proper placement and deterioration.
- Ensure there are no cracks in vinyl/rubber covering or liquid pads.
- Confirm proper inflation of air helmets.
- Examine all rivets, screws and snaps.
- Report all damage to coach, trainer or equipment manager.

SOURCES

- [National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment](#)
- [Oregon School Activities Association](#)

PACE RISK MANAGEMENT

800-285-5461 • PACE.OSBA.ORG • RISKMANAGEMENT@SDAO.COM