



**Essendon District
Football League
Sports Trainers in Community
Australian Football Policy**

2026

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Introduction

The AFL expects that football matches at all levels will be played in good quality environments and the safety of participants is central to that environment. As part of a risk management approach to the prevention of, and prompt attention to injuries in Australian Football, it is important that adequate and timely first aid is provided. In ideal situations one or more qualified trainers will be in attendance, generally attached to each team to provide the best possible support to participants.

Sports trainers and first aiders have been part of Australian Football since the origins of the game. They are part of the fabric of every club and play a key role in player preparation and safety at all levels.

In community Australian Football clubs, first aid is usually provided by sports trainers or by other volunteers with medical or higher level allied health (e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational health & safety) qualifications and experience. Sports trainers are likely to play a more major role when there is no-one else with medical or allied health qualifications at a game or training. It is important that sports trainers, and others, are well trained in the first aid needs specifically relevant to Australian Football at the level at which they are involved (e.g. Auskick, juniors, youth, seniors, females, talent pathway, AFL clubs, veterans etc).

In previously published recommendations the AFL has stated that:

- A qualified first aider is present where participants are under 16 years
- A qualified sports trainer is present where participants are 16 years and older

Research Project

In 2009/10 the AFL, through its Research Board, engaged Ballarat University to conduct a significant research project, reviewing the roles, competencies and training of providers of first aid and trainer services for Australian Football. This policy focusing on the management of injuries and medical emergencies in community Australian Football has been developed as part of that research. As a result, more, comprehensive requirements will apply in community football and will be introduced from 2012.

The Australian Football League (AFL) believes that planning and practising what to do when an emergency occurs is an essential part of risk management. All football leagues and clubs must be conversant with first aid procedures and able to deal with emergencies, so participants are well cared for. All leagues and clubs should ensure that:

- A person with current first aid qualifications is available at all football games and training sessions.

- An appropriately and adequately stocked first aid kit and well maintained sport specific rescue/transport equipment are accessible at all training and competition venues.

A sports trainer or first aid provider involved with a football club or team should have a clear understanding of the role and importance of injury prevention and immediate injury management in football. They should be aware of their responsibilities in relation to first aid equipment and facilities, and their obligations in relation to duty of care and record keeping.

Minimum Requirements

Qualified Sports trainers (as recognised by the AFL*) meet or exceed the minimum requirements of this policy.

At a minimum, at least one person competent in emergency management procedures and responses must be in attendance at all matches/competitions and, where practical, training/practice sessions. This person must be competent in:

- 1. Emergency planning**—including ensuring access to a telephone, venue access for emergency vehicles and access to appropriate and adequate first aid equipment and supplies.
- 2. On-field assessment of injured participants**—including the STOP (Stop, Talk, Observe, Prevent) and TOTAPS (Talk, Observe, Touch, Active movement, Passive movement & Skills test – some of which will be completed off field). This includes the immediate management of severe injuries and life threatening medical emergencies including spinal & neck injuries; concussion & intracranial (brain) injuries; unconscious casualties; airway/respiratory distress such as choking, airway obstructions & asthma.
- 3. On-field communication**—including signals, team work and liaising with the umpire and others in official capacities.
- 4. Understanding emergency response priorities and applying emergency procedures** — including the (DRSABCD) Danger, Response, send for help, Airways, Breathing, and CPR and Defibrillation procedure.
- 5. Calling an ambulance**
- 6. Transporting injured participants**—including lifts, carries and use of an appropriate stretcher (pole and scoop).

Key Policy directives:

Matches

There must be at least one person with the above competencies in attendance at a match/competition, otherwise the activity should be postponed, rescheduled or cancelled until such time as a suitably competent person is able to attend.

- This policy must be complied with at youth and senior matches. The AFL Emergency Response Coordinator role and training (see next section for definition) – meets the minimum standards.
- At AFL Auskick Centres and junior matches (up to Under 11), generally a person with a current, nationally accredited first aid certificate* will be acceptable if

someone with a higher level trainer accreditation/qualification is not available.
*Must include assessed competencies HLTAID003 (Provide First Aid) or
HLTAID002 (Provide Basic Emergency Life Support)

Training

It is recommended that there is at least one person with the above competencies in attendance at all training/practice sessions. In any case the club, generally through the coach, will be responsible for providing a safe training environment if there is no other person with those competencies present at training. Some coaches may have the required competencies through their own personal or professional training.

General

Generally, it is highly recommended that at least one person with an AFL recognised sports trainer or first aid qualification is in attendance at all training/practice sessions and matches/competitions.

In the longer term, the AFL vision is to have as many people with higher level trainer qualifications serving the game as possible. The AFL is committed to supporting leagues, clubs and teams in their efforts to meet the requirements of this policy. The AFL will therefore work towards ensuring that geographically and financially accessible football-related first aid and sports trainer training courses are available to anyone wishing to attend.

* Note: Overall responsibility of clubs to provide safe training environment

Essendon District Football League Match Day Trainer Requirements

All Trainers;

- (a) for Senior competitions (18.5s and above) must have a minimum of either Level 1 Sports Trainer Qualification or a Qualified Medical Practitioner (QMP);
- (b) for Junior competitions must have a minimum of a First Aid Certificate or a Qualified Medical Practitioner (QMP).
- (c) may deliver water for all competitions Under 14 and above.

By-law 14.1 had outdated trainer requirements – states that accreditation of Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) is sufficient. ERC is no longer recognised by the AFL.

Australian Football Sports Trainer Training (Level 1)

All participants who successfully complete this training will have the essential and expected competencies required to fulfil the role of an Australian Football Sports Trainer. This includes the minimum competencies in emergency management procedures and responses, and the assessment and immediate management of severe injuries and life threatening medical emergencies required by at least one person in attendance at all games and training. It builds on the Emergency response training course and includes the basic competencies expected of an Australian Football Trainer in the areas of providing an appropriately safe environment and the prevention and management of injuries.

Topics to be covered and approximate time allocation:

PART A – Introduction

1. The role of the Australian Football Sports Trainer [10 mins]

- a) Safety
- b) Injury prevention
- c) Immediate injury management
- d) Rules applying to trainers

2. The responsibilities of the Australian Football Sports Trainer [1 hr 15]

- a) Communication and relationships
- b) Record keeping
- c) Referrals to health care
- d) professionals
- e) First aid equipment
- f) First aid facilities
- g) Legal responsibilities
- h) Injury management
- i) Injury prevention

PART B: Injury and illness assessment & immediate management

(Lecture and Practical component)

1. Concussion and spinal injuries: [30 mins]

- a) Spinal/neck injuries
- b) Concussion and intracranial (brain) injuries
- c) Unconscious casualties

2. Common injuries: [1 hr 15 mins]

- a) Soft tissue injuries
- b) Fractures
- c) Dislocations
- d) Lower limb injuries
- e) Upper limb injuries

3. Medical conditions and head injuries: [30 mins]

- a) Asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, heart conditions and stroke
- b) Infection control including communicable diseases
- c) Ear, nose, and eye injuries

- d) Teeth and jaw injuries
- e) Severe allergic reactions

4. Taping [3 hrs]

- a) Ankles
- b) Thumbs
- c) Fingers

5. Injury prevention and risk management: [1 hr]

- a) Hydration
- b) Stretching
- c) Massage
- d) Return to play

6. Session 6: Review

Assessment

Competencies will be assessed by presenters throughout the day and a take home/online knowledge assessment tool will be used to complete the course. A preliminary learning package (to be developed) in downloadable and on-line formats will be available for preparatory learning.

[Total Course time approximately 8 hours]

Medical professionals may be eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning to attain their Accreditations. If applicable, the Volunteer or their Club can request consideration from the EDFL and/or their preferred course provider.

Service Provided	First Aid	Sports Trainer
Course (s)	Nationally Accredited Training Level 1 Or Level 2 Or First Aid (Including competency: HLTAID003, HLTAID002)	National Accredited Training Level 1 Or Level 2
Pre-Requirement (s)	CPR must be current	First Aid & CPR
Training Structure Recommended	AFL Auskick and Junior Matches & Trainings	Meets requirements for all Matches & Trainings