

Federal and state sports safety legislation

There are three important pieces of legislation that relate directly to sports safety. Illinois House Bill 1279, also known as the Rashidi A. Wheeler Initiative, and The Community Access to Emergency Defibrillation Act of 2001 (Community AED Act) were both enacted into law in 2001 and 2002. The Catastrophic Injury Prevention Act of 2010 is pending legislation that is being considered by the California State Legislature. Here is more information about these important pieces of legislation.



The Rashidi A. Wheeler Initiative

The Illinois State Legislature signed legislation requiring outdoor football stadiums, soccer fields, baseball fields and other outdoor facilities to have an automated external defibrillator (AED) on hand to help save lives in the event of a medical emergency. House Bill 1279, sponsored by State Representative Daniel J. Burke (D-Chicago) and State Senator Martin A. Sandoval (D-Cicero), adds outdoor physical fitness and sports facilities to the list of facilities currently required to have defibrillators.

This bill is known as the R.A.W. Initiative and was named after Northwestern University football player Rashidi Wheeler, who died during practice in 2001. After a review of the tragic incident, it was determined that an on-site AED could have saved Wheeler's life.

The Community Access to Emergency Defibrillation Act of 2001 (Community AED Act)

This act was signed into law in June 2002 by President Bush, as a component of a comprehensive bioterrorism package. This act amends the Public Health Service Act and authorizes over \$50 million annually for communities to establish public access defibrillation programs. Communities receiving these grants will be expected to:

- Train first responders (local emergency medical services personnel and others likely to use the devices) to administer immediate care, including CPR and automated external defibrillation, to cardiac arrest victims.
- Purchase and place automated external defibrillators in public places where cardiac arrests are likely to occur.
- Encourage private companies in the community to purchase automated external defibrillators and train employees in CPR and emergency defibrillation.
- Collect data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in increasing the out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rate in the community.

Provide information for school-based programs to help prevent sudden cardiac arrest in high schools, including resources for heart screenings and AED placement consultation.

Catastrophic Injury Protection Act of 2010

On Wednesday, January 27, 2010, [Assembly members Mary Hayashi, D-Hayward](#) and [Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo](#), with the [California Athletic Trainers' Association](#), presented AB 1647, The Catastrophic Injury Prevention Act of 2010, a California State Capital bill calling for increased safety precautions for young athletes.

The bill is co-authored by Senator Tony Strickland, R-California; and state Assemblymembers Tom Ammiano, D-San Francisco; Joan Buchanan, D-Almo; Mike Davis, D-Los Angeles and Lori Saldana, D-San Diego. Studies show a significant increase in catastrophic injuries resulting in death or permanent disability. In the last academic year, 40 secondary school athletes suffered life-altering injuries and over 125 youth athletes died, including 18 in California.

AB 1647 requires:

- Department of Education to adopt a heat-acclimatization program established by the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) or another similarly recognized organization
- A written emergency action plan
- On-site availability of a regularly maintained and tested AED
- Any athlete suspected to have sustained a concussion must immediately be removed from activity; evaluated by a licensed physician/athletic trainer under the direction of a licensed physician; and, receive written clearance from a health care provider before returning to play
- Title protection for athletic trainers requiring them to:
 - Graduate from an accredited college/university athletic training program
 - Pass an examination approved by the Board of Certification
 - Meet the continuing education requirements defined by the Board of Certification

Brain injury, heat illness and sudden cardiac arrest are just a few of the serious conditions suffered by young athletes on the playing field, and athletic trainers are educated to manage such catastrophic injuries. More than stereotypical ankle tapers, athletic trainers' are physical medicine specialists who provide prevention, recognition, clinical assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and reconditioning of such injuries and illnesses that are sustained during activity.

Nationwide, only 42% of high schools have athletic training services. California is one of only three states that does not regulate the athletic training profession.