



HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

It is the responsibility of NAKMAS Management, instructors, volunteers, and students alike to ensure that health and safety is always considered in and around the martial arts environment. It is possible for everyone from ground level upwards to be sued if there is an incident compromising someone's safety, and, this Health and Safety Policy has been prepared to give everyone the best chance of avoiding such actions

Health and Safety Policy Statement

In accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the NAKMAS NGB has agreed the following Policy Statement.

NAKMAS attaches the greatest importance to the safety of its members and will pursue policies designed to ensure that as far as reasonably practical, all members will be equipped to ensure a healthy environment and safe methods of coaching/working. This policy cannot operate without full consultation and full co-operation; and it places a high priority on accident prevention by management and members working together to identify those situations which could lead to personal injury and hazard to the health of members, students or other persons and by rectifying these situations before accidents occur.

The promotion of safety is seen by NAKMAS as being a point of responsibility of management and members. Management's responsibility includes the promotion of safety in the form of the NAKMAS Health & Safety Policy, safety training via coach development, information and supervision and compliance with appropriate legislation. The member's responsibility includes a constant awareness for the safety to him/herself and the students. She/he will contribute to ideas and methods of promoting a safe environment and systems to coaching/working and to participate in safety training.

NAKMAS will provide means of investigating and resolving safety problems which are common throughout the membership.

Screening Members

- Before a person begins to train, it is essential that a screening form of some sort is completed, in order to establish his/her medical background and fitness to train. Download a sample form from www.nakmas.org.uk. This can be used or adapted, for this purpose. Alternatively, you may have your own. Medical details, personal details and doctor's details, plus a signature and a date, are essential information to attain. It is also a legal requirement that you have records of all your students' names and addresses, and this is also useful if you may have to cancel a class, or contact them for some other reason
- If the student is a Young Person (under the age of 18 years), a parent or carer must sign this form. Do not accept children (under 16) into the club without first meeting a parent or carer.

- A NAKMAS student licence application form must be completed and sent to Head Office by the end of the fourth week of training. NAKMAS provides basic free cover for new students for the first four weeks of training only. This form must be fully completed by the student or a parent/carer (students under 18 years).
- The form must be countersigned by either the Chief Instructor or authorised secretary of the club. The club code should also be written onto the form.
- Associate/Satellite members will be expected to follow the same procedure within their own organisation.
- Any medical conditions (other than the general asthma, diabetes, hay fever etc) must be backed by a medical letter, for the safety of the student and the protection of the instructor, the club and NAKMAS. A copy of this letter must be sent to NAKMAS with the licence application form.
- If a club has a student with haemophilia or an HIV related illness, they must refer to NAKMAS Head Office for further advice.
- An accident or death resulting from an undisclosed pre-existing condition will invalidate the NAKMAS insurance policy.
- If a club agrees to accept a student with a medical condition, all efforts must be made to conform to safety regulations. It is the club's responsibility.
- If any condition is likely to subject a student to possible collapse, for example, epilepsy, the floor of the training hall must be matted.
- Instructors should also ensure they know how to handle any possible medical emergencies, for the students within their care. For example, where is the student's asthma inhaler? What would you do if a student went into a diabetic hypo (hypoglycaemic attack)?
- If the student with the medical condition is a young child, it is recommended that the parent stay during the session.
- Clubs are recommended that students of a more mature age get medical clearance before they start to train. This is also the case for students with excessive weight, especially if they have not exercised recently.

Supervision

In a class of adults, an instructor to student ratio should, on average, be maintained at around 1:30. With classes requiring increased supervision this ratio should be reduced. Obviously the fewer the students, the more personal the instruction will be

In a class of children, the instructor to student ratio should be reduced to 1:20. (1:10 for children under 8 years, according to Ofsted regulations). However, this is not to say that more students cannot train if there is only one instructor. The class may need to be run so that not all the students are on their feet at once. For example, when doing kata or forms, they may be performed by grades or ages. There should rarely be a situation where everyone is sparring at once but on occasions this is the case, and higher graded students can be pulled out alternatively to provide extra eyes.

The instructor in charge should NEVER be training or sparring alongside a whole class of students. There should ALWAYS be an instructor supervising during a class. If there is more than one instructor, they may take turns to teach and train.

Safe training areas

- It has been established that hard floors are not suitable for some types of martial arts training. When seeking new venues, sprung or matted floors are preferable. Where stone or concrete floors only are available, non-slip mats should be used. Also, be aware of slippery floors.
- The floor area must be uncluttered, and pillars, shelves, radiators etc should be well back from the training area or covered/padded. Chairs and tables must be kept out of the way. Light fittings must be above eight feet high or covered with a protective mesh. Be very careful

when training in a room with either mirrors or ceiling to floor windows. Incidents can be very dangerous, and expensive.

- Personal items such as bags, shoes, coats etc should be well away from the training area.
- Good ventilation is essential since considerable body heat is generated during a session, and heating should be adequate especially when teaching children.
- The training area must not be overcrowded. Large classes should be split timewise, or only one half to practice at a time. See Supervision.
- It is the responsibility of the instructor in charge to make sure surrounding equipment such as aerobic steps, mats, weights etc are not likely to topple over. Although these should be put away safely by the previous users, ultimate responsibility for the safety in the martial arts session lies with the instructor.
- If you have spectators in your class, it is essential to ensure that there are no young children or babies running/crawling around. Also, noise from spectators may affect the class by way of concentration and safety.
- Check students have no jewellery on, hair is tied back, and toe/finger nails are cut.
- Ask students about any previous injuries which may affect training. A club may be sued for an injury when it was in fact caused by playing rugby the day before.

Protective equipment

- 'Defensive' padding is a valuable training asset, including forearm and shin pads.
- A headguard and gumshield (dentist fitted) may also be of value.
- Body armour is useful in preventing injury. A boxer's groin guard is recommended in preference to a plastic cup slipped into the jockstrap. Women can wear a sanitary towel to protect the perineum. There is insufficient evidence available to make recommendations concerning breast and abdominal protection for women.
- The merits of protection offered by thick padding on the fist and instep must be weighed against the tendency of the wearer to rely on it. As a compromise, it is suggested that mitts be worn for the purpose of mitigating local injury. The padding, however, should not be so thick as to allow the head to be jolted without leaving an obvious mark.
- The mitt should ideally have not more than 1cm of foam padding covering the knuckles. There should be no padding around the thumb.
- NAKMAS requirements for tournaments are the white elasticated mitts and shin/instep pads. These should be no more than 1cm in thickness.

Head Injury & Concussion

Concussion, also known as minor head injury, is commonly caused by falls, assaults and sports accidents. The effects of concussion can leave people with symptoms including dizziness, nausea, confusion or an inability to process or retain information, sensitivity to light, and vision distortion.

Minor head injury is defined by:

- Loss of consciousness of less than 30 minutes (or no loss of consciousness)
- Post-traumatic amnesia (PTA) of less than 24 hours after injury (this is a period where people are confused, act strangely and are unable to remember what has just happened).

It is important to note that only around 10% of reported minor head injuries/concussions involve a loss of consciousness – so it is important to not solely rely on this as an indicator.

Seeking Medical Assistance

- After a concussion/minor head injury, it is important, if possible, the person is accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Do not allow the person to take aspirin.
- While unlikely, there is a small risk of developing complications, so if any of the following symptoms are experienced in the few days after the injury, a visit to the A&E Department is needed as soon as possible:
 1. Loss of consciousness
 2. New deafness
 3. Loss of balance or difficulty walking
 4. Weakness in one or both arms or legs
 5. Vomiting
 6. Clear fluid coming from ears or nose
 7. Drowsiness
 8. Disorientation
 9. Problems understanding or speaking
 10. Blurred or double vision
 11. Inability to be woken
 12. Bleeding from one or both ears
 13. Fits
 14. Severe headache after taking paracetamol

It is important to get doctor's consultation before returning to a contact art (no less than three weeks after injury).

Safe warm-up and exercising

- Prior to each training session there must be a suitable warm-up. This will lead to less strains and sprains and more training benefits. The warm up should take 'cold' athletes and gradually bring them to a 'warm' state by a gently escalating series of exercises
- Warm-up sessions should last no longer than 15 minutes.
- They should not include specific fitness training such as sit ups, press ups etc. This type of exercise should be done later in the session.
- Certain forms of warm up and exercising should be done just prior to certain sections of a class. For example, it is pointless warming up the legs extensively at the start of the session, if students will not be executing low stances and kicks until the latter part of the session.
- Slow basic techniques can be done as part of a warm up, as this will ensure all the right muscles are being warmed-up.
- Using a warm up which is also done in a basketball or football session is not appropriate, and warm up exercises should be designed to relate to the martial art you teach. A standing martial art may need a completely different warm up to a throwing art.
- Warm up exercises should always be executed slowly and carefully to avoid straining any muscles or ligaments.
- It is a proven medical fact that children should not be doing 'adult' press ups but should have the knees on the floor in order to avoid the delicate wrist area taking the strain.
- With press ups, it is essential that students are taught how to execute them properly. Even adults will injure themselves (their back in particular) if not shown the correct method of execution.
- The instructor should never join in a warm up fully. He should warm up prior to the session and alternate between demonstrations of exercises and supervising to ensure that students are not injuring themselves. Body and facial language will tell a lot, and an instructor will not pick up on this language if he/she is concentrating on his or her own exercising.

Cool down

- It is important for some kind of cool down to be done at the end of a physical session. Students who have been working hard for an hour or two will have tired muscles, and may feel hyperactive.
- The sessions can end with some gentle work, slow technique or kata/form, some tai-chi or yoga type activity or simple walking slowly.
- The type of cool down needed will depend to some degree on the content of the session.

First Aid

- It is recommended that each club has a qualified first aider in attendance, although it is not currently a legal requirement. As many of our clubs are run in large sports centres and community halls, central first aiders may be enough. St Johns, Red Cross or specific vocational first aid courses are recommended, locally to your club makes sense.
- Instructors must have access to a first aid kit, however.

Accident Reporting

- If there is an accident in the club, an Accident Record must be completed. These are available online. One copy is to be sent to NAKMAS, and a copy kept by the club. The accident MUST be reported within 7 days, regardless of whether a claim is to be made. If this is not clear at the time, write a note on the form.
- All accident records must be legally kept for three years after the date of the accident.
- There are differences between incidents and accidents. Both need to be logged but only accidents need accident records completed. An incident could be a minor knock causing a bruise or slight cut. An accident will result in hospital or ambulance attention being required.
- If a club is unsure whether the injury is serious, they should recommend the student visits the GP to get it checked.
- If the student is in tremendous pain or there is lots of blood, or a changed state of behaviour/mind, send him or her straight to the hospital.
- If the student cannot be moved, ring for an ambulance.
- The instructor must use his/her common sense on how serious a matter is.
- Copies of accident records received at NAKMAS must be sent to the insurance company, so if a club is sending unnecessary forms, and an unusual number are received, it is likely to set off an investigation of the club's training practices.
- If in doubt, ask!

Fire Drills/Precautions

- There must be fire exits and/or a fire escape from the training area. These should be kept clear of all clutter, shoes, bags etc.
- All students should be regularly instructed in what to do if there is a fire alarm sounded. This must include where to stand and who to listen to.
- Regular practice fire drills are especially important in children's classes, as children will either panic or get excited when an alarm sound. They should be taught how to line up and walk to the point of assembly.
- Remember to count students at the beginning and end of each training session in the event of an emergency.
- Also remember to keep the register up to date and take it with you to check on attendance in the event of a fire drill/emergency.

Children/Young People (legally, under the age of 18 years)

There are a few additional issues which need to be considered carefully if children are being taught in a club. These are in addition to the Safeguarding and Protecting Young People Policy which should be read thoroughly.

- While the young student is in the club's care, the instructor is acting loco parentis, i.e. in place of a parent/carer. The child is the instructor's responsibility from the moment the parent drops the child at the club, until the child is collected.
- It is important to emphasise to the parent/carer that the child is brought into the hall, rather than left in the car park, and collected from the hall, and not asked to meet him/her outside after the session.
- This is especially important during darker, shorter days. The safety of the child is paramount.
- There may be times when the hall has a power cut and has been dropped in the car park, or the instructor has not turned up for the class for some unexpected reason; the child will be waiting alone for at least an hour. (These may seem to be unlikely situations, but they have happened to some, although rare).
- Spectators during children's classes — some instructors prefer not to have spectators during classes. The advantage of this is the quietness and the children being able to concentrate more fully. However, be aware, that if there are parents there are witnesses. If there is incident it is always good to have witnesses, otherwise it is a child's word against yours. Also, it is useful to have 'helpers' to supervise children going to and from the toilet (if it is outside the hall), retying belts and so on.
- In cold weather, or while training on a cold floor, children may need to visit the toilet more often. This is nature not them being a nuisance.
- Be aware of the physical and emotional changes children are going through at certain ages (for example puberty). They may affect their training and you should be sympathetic to them. However, that is not to say that the students can take advantage of your sympathy, so you don't need to let on you know!
- Children should not be breaking tiles or wood. If your martial art dictates children learn breaking skills, use the specially produced 'fake tiles'. Their bones are not developed enough, and you could be subjecting them to permanent damage.
- Very young children should not use the standard focus mitts and kick pads. They are too hard and may cause injury. You can purchase softer versions so look out for them.
- Ensure that children are taught the basic techniques before allowing them to spar. More injuries occur in beginners than in more advanced students. This also applies to adults.
- Parents/carers must be informed clearly of the risks involved for children taking part in competitive events. They must give their written permission before they can compete.

Use of Weapons

The use of live weapons for children or in front of children is strictly prohibited. During practice sessions live blades must not be used. Advanced adult students/instructors may use some 'real' weapons for restricted use in martial arts. Full Weapons Policy is available from NAKMAS.

Tournaments

Separate tournament guidelines are available from NAKMAS.

Additional points to consider

- Ensure all your insurances are up to date, and that your students are all insured. Clubs must inform NAKMAS if any changes occur as not doing so may put the club in breach of NAKMAS Policies. Examples may be a venue closing, chief instructor resigning, secretary changing, change of club welfare officer, new address or telephone number, club temporarily closed etc.

- It is important that students carry their valid and current NAKMAS licence with them to all classes, gradings, courses and other events. This not only proves they have valid insurance but includes a health monitoring record which should be completed as necessary and checked regularly.
- If a club uses visiting instructors, make sure they are aware of students' medical conditions, fire procedures, NAKMAS policy requirements, any other club specific issues which might affect the class or the instructor.
- It is the responsibility of the club to keep a record of student's licence details and expiry dates. Insurances should be renewed before they expire. NAKMAS will remind the club when the club insurance (General Liability) is about to expire but students and other instructors are the responsibility of the club alone.
- All clubs should have a telephone — either a mobile one with them, or access to a working one in the venue they are using. This may be a lifesaver.
- Mixed classes (children and adults). This is not recommended as both children and adults need completely different training. The syllabus should be different, the technique emphasis, the practical variations and use of the martial art, and the language should be different. If there is no other option, there must be at least two instructors and the class should be split into two groups. Children's classes should also incorporate elements of fun and games and adults are unlikely to appreciate these. In reverse, adults need more detailed and frank explanations of aspects of a martial art, and these would be confusing and possibly upsetting for many children. Occasional mixed training is acceptable providing the training is adapted accordingly.

Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments should be executed for every venue/hall you teach in or take students to for events, for example tournaments. This is good practice to protect you and your students. Many venues will ask to see them. Sample forms are available from NAKMAS should you need these.

All Information kept in relation to this Policy will be in accordance with the NAKMAS GDPR Privacy Policy which can be found on the website.