



# Sudden Cardiac Arrest Guidelines

## Act- 2023-235



**Sudden Cardiac Arrest** during exercise is the number one cause of death in the United States for student-athletes. The guidelines below outline processes that might prevent incidence of Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Steps for improving chances of survival are also provided.

**Pre-Participation Evaluation (Sport Physicals)**-The goal of the PPE is to identify concerning findings that can lead to injury, worsening an otherwise well-controlled medical problem or identifying a problem that can lead to death during practice and competition. There are two main elements of the PPE: (1) an assessment of the athlete's medical history, which includes a family history, and (2) a physical examination.

**Education and Awareness**- Educate coaches, athletes, and guardians on sudden cardiac arrest signs and symptoms.

**Emergency Action Plan**- Schools should have an emergency action plan in place for managing sudden cardiac arrest incidents, including the availability and location of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and personnel trained in CPR and AED use.

**Regular Training**- Coaches and staff should receive regular training in CPR and AED use, and schools may conduct drills to practice their emergency action plan.

**Return-to-Play Protocols**- Guidelines for when a student athlete can return to play after experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or being diagnosed with a heart condition should be established.

**Record Keeping**- Schools should maintain accurate records of pre-participation screenings, emergency action plans, training certifications, and any incidents of sudden cardiac arrest.



**Sudden Cardiac Arrest  
Action Steps**

1. Call 911
2. Get an AED
3. Administer CPR

## Sources

**Simon's Heart**

**National Federation of State High School Associations**

**Alabama High School Athletic Association**