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## **Cheerleading Safety Guidelines**

There is an inherent risk of injury involved with any athletic activity. Drill team, pep squad and cheerleading can involve students performing jumps, gymnastics and various stunts that can cause physical harm. The importance of a properly trained coaching staff is paramount. Following these guidelines in coordination with the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors (AACCA) Safety Course, and/or WIAA sanctioned classes may help minimize the risk of injury.

*As of August 25, 2008, Stunt Certification is required for Cheer Coaches who intend to have their cheer squad(s) perform stunts. The certification program must be approved by either the Washington State Cheer Coaches Association or the WIAA. Coaches must be recertified every three (3) years.*

### **Facility & Equipment**

- Hold practice in a suitable location, away from distractions and other athletes, no concrete floors.
- Insure mat and spotting harness are available and used when needed.

### **Supervision & Instruction**

- Supervise all practice sessions.
- Enforce WIAA rules regarding prohibited stunts.
- Distribute a list of prohibited stunts.
- Know the squad's ability level and match stunts accordingly.
- Include conditioning and strength building exercises.
- Include stretching and flexibility exercises before games, practice, pep rallies
- Jewelry is prohibited except religious and medic alert medals which must be taped under clothing.
- Soft-soled shoes with proper support must be worn.
- No baggy clothing, long fingernails or long, loose hair.
- All landings are assisted.
- Provide proper training prior to attempting any gymnastics.
- Train all members in proper spotting techniques.
- Remind students to keep focused on the game when the ball is in play to avoid being injured.
- Obtain outside help if stunts or choreography is beyond coach's skill level.
- Be alert for eating disorders.
- Use a whistle.
- Make sure all players warm up and cool down,
- Ensure proper hydration of athletes.
- Ensure adequate first aid equipment is available.