

Mouthguard Policy.

TYPE OF POLICY	Participation
EFFECTIVE DATE	5 th February 2019
POLICY OWNER	Australian Rugby League Commission
POLICY CONTACT	NRL General Manager – Game Development and Education

A. REASON FOR POLICY

The policy outlines the National Rugby League's position on participants wearing mouthguards for contact training sessions, trials and competition games.

B. POLICY STATEMENT

The intent of this policy is to ensure that participants are aware of the NRL and Australian Dental Associations recommendations regarding mouthguards, and consider the potential physical and financial cost of not wearing a mouthguard or wearing an ill-fitting mouthguard.

C. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Rugby League participants in Australia regardless of age.

D. POLICY HISTORY

PARTICIPATION POLICY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	VERSION	RELEASE DATE	AUTHOR
P012	1.0	5 th February 2019	National Participation Policy Committee

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

A mouthguard is a device worn in the mouth that helps prevent injuries to the teeth, lips, cheeks, tongue and jaw by helping absorb the force of an impact with the face and jaw. A properly fitted mouthguard should be protective and comfortable.

It is strongly recommended that a mouthguard be worn while playing any sport that involves potential trauma to the mouth. A hit from any object to the mouth can cause immediate and unseen damage to the gums and the roots of the teeth that may result in extensive dental injury.

Many dental injuries are painful, expensive and time consuming to treat and may result in permanent disfigurement. They can also result in time off school or work. Wearing a mouthguard is an excellent way to help prevent an injury to the teeth, mouth and jaw. There has been extensive research regarding the effectiveness of mouthguards preventing injuries. A good mouthguard **should be comfortable to wear, well retained and shouldn't interfere with breathing or talking.**

2.0. TYPES OF MOUTHGUARDS

Ready-made mouthguards (also called a stock mouthguard). These can be purchased over the counter at many sports shops and Pharmacies. A ready-made mouthguard offers the least **protection because it is not made to fit the wearer's mouth. Many athletes find** this type of mouthguard to be bulky, loose and uncomfortable.

Mouth-formed mouthguard (also called self-adapted or boil and bite mouthguard). This type of mouthguard can be purchased over the counter from sports stores and Pharmacies. It is partially **moulded to fit the wearer's mouth by boiling the piece in water then biting into the plastic.** This type of mouthguard can also be quite bulky and uncomfortable.

Custom-fitted mouthguard. This is the type of mouthguard strongly recommended by Dentists **(Australian Dental Association) and the NRL. It is individually designed for the wearer's mouth by a** Dentist and is generally comfortable to wear and does not interfere with speaking and breathing. The custom-made mouthguard provides much better protection but is more expensive than the other varieties of mouthguard, however this expense is far less than the treatment of dental injuries

3.0. MOUTHGUARD POLICY

The NRL supports and strongly recommends the use of mouthguards by all players participating in Rugby League during contact training and games. The custom-fitted mouthguard is the recommended and ideal form, but players should consult their dentist for the type that is best suited to them and their level of participation prior to participation in Rugby League contact training or playing of games.