

# Neck Injury & Cervical Collar Policy.

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

## A. REASON FOR POLICY

This policy provides a resource for NRL Sports Trainers at the Community level in the response to neck and spinal injury.

## B. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy outlines a series of compliance requirements for sports trainers to respond and apply in the management of suspected Neck and Spinal Injury.

## C. SCOPE

This policy applies to accredited NRL Level 1 and Level 2 Sports Trainers.

## D. DEFINITIONS

SPORTS TRAINER	Personnel with NRL approved accreditation who are responsible for on field Rugby League injury management
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## E. POLICY HISTORY

PARTICIPATION POLICY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	VERSION	RELEASE DATE	AUTHOR
P009	1.0	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	National Participation Policy Committee

## NECK INJURY & CERVICAL COLLAR POLICY – COMMUNITY TRAINERS

### 1.0. INTRODUCTION

Cervical spine (neck) injuries and other spinal injuries are a possibility during Rugby League matches and at training for contact sports. These injuries are potentially very serious and life altering for all of those involved, not just the injured player.

Correct management of a potential or suspected cervical spine (neck) or any other spinal injury is essential. It is therefore necessary for correctly trained professionals (such as paramedics or doctors) to assume responsibility for the assessment, management and movement/transportation of players suspected of having sustained these injuries. Until these professionals arrive at the scene, the most experienced/qualified trainer present should take control of the situation.

### 2.0. SIGNS OF INJURY

Signs that a player may have a cervical spine (neck) or spinal injury include but are not limited to:

- Neck pain +/- player reporting experiencing a crack (or similar) in the neck
- Unwillingness to move neck/head by the player (pain or apprehension)
- Numbness or pins and needles in any one or more limbs (arms and legs)
- Loss or reduction of power/strength in any one or more limbs
- Unconscious – **always presume a neck/spinal injury is present BUT don't forget DRABC** (Danger, Response, Send for Help, Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Defibrillator)

### 3.0. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

a. If a neck or spine injury is suspected (including the unconscious player), call for help and including calling for an Ambulance (000). DO NOT attempt to move the player unless it is absolutely essential (e.g. player is in immediate danger and there is no other option to reduce this danger/threat) and safe for the player to be moved. Otherwise wait for professional assistance from a qualified Medical Practitioner or registered Paramedic.

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- b. Remember to manage any other injuries or illness and prevent further injury whilst maintaining neck and spinal immobilisation.
- c. Manual In-Line Support of the neck is recommended (this is a skill taught in NRL Sports Trainer courses).
- d. The use of cervical collars (even if the trainer has been certified to apply them) is currently NOT recommended in the pre-hospital setting, as per the latest Australian Resuscitation Council Guidelines (January 2016). If the attending Medical Practitioner or Paramedics request assistance, then those appropriately trained and currently accredited can assist with the application of a semi rigid cervical collar.
- e. Even if a cervical collar has been applied it is ESSENTIAL to maintain Manual In-Line support at all times.

NOTE: If there is any doubt regarding a neck or spinal injury it is necessary to manage the injured player as if they have one.