

Calgary West Little League



Safety Plan

Troy Cleland

League Safety Officer

Preamble:

Calgary West Little League is dedicated to providing a safe environment in which boys and girls can develop baseball knowledge and skill while having fun. Baseball is one of the safest sports children can play and those Little League organizations that have followed A Safety Awareness Program (ASAP) movement in Little League have shown a measurable reduction in injuries.

Statement of Principles**Principal 1:**

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

We believe that every member of Calgary West Little League organization has a responsibility for the safety of all participants.

Principal 2:

Safety begins with knowledge.

It is the responsibility of Calgary West Little League to provide the necessary information to players, parents, coaches, umpires and any volunteer working with their children about all aspects of safety to provide a physically and emotionally safe experience for all members of our league.

Principal 3:

Primary responsibility for safety rests with the coaches.

We are of the firm belief that the most important safety intervention is a well-trained and knowledgeable coach. Primary responsibility for safety during practices and games rests with the coach. During games, this primary responsibility is shared with the umpire. To this end, Calgary West Little League is dedicated to the training, development and mentoring of its coaches and umpires.

Principal 4:

The development of adequate fundamental skills is the athlete's best protection.

We are of the firm belief that the athlete's skill at all aspects of the game is the best prevention against serious injury. To this end we are dedicated to the skill development of all players on all teams. We will demonstrate that commitment through the design and implementation of a development plan from Rookie Ball through Senior division that will provide a career path for the athlete that adheres to accepted developmental principles. This will include the establishing of age specific goals for all players, coaching manuals that will reflect those goals and league wide development camps within season and in the off season.

We also recognize that different players have different levels of ability and potential. We further recognize that the level of skill, potential, interest and commitment will vary, particularly in the younger ages. We will therefore implement policies and recommendations to coaches that take these factors into account while still maintaining the principals of fair play. For example, for the sake of safety, a coach will not play a player at a position where they could get hurt due to lack of skill. However, that same coach will be committed to developing that player's skill so they eventually can play the position and will strive to find an infield position the player can play some of the time.

Principal 5:**Proper use of proper equipment enhances both safety and enjoyment**

We are committed to providing our players with safe physical environments and appropriate equipment. All equipment supplied by Calgary West Little League meets or exceeds Little League International standards for safety. Where equipment has been demonstrated to provide a significant safety advantage, we will adopt this equipment even if not required to do so by Little League International.

Where players supply their own equipment by choice or requirement, we insist that the equipment used meets Little League requirements. Parents will also be made aware of optional safety equipment they may wish to purchase on their own.

Principal 6:**Mandatory screening of volunteers is an essential safety step**

Children develop best when they feel safe. They also trust their parents to put them into safe situations. We will therefore earn the trust and confidence of the players and their parents through the screening and police check of all on field volunteers in Calgary West Little League.

Principal 7:**Emotional safety is every bit as important as physical safety.**

We will emphasize to parents and coaches the importance of children feeling emotionally as well as physically safe. We will provide the information that will help coaches and parents to provide this important "other" type of safety. We will also require all players and coaches to review and complete their respective Codes of Conduct and the CWLL Zero Tolerance Policy prior to the beginning of each season ([Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association \(cwill.org\)](http://Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association (cwill.org)))

Principal 8:**The health and safety of all players, coaches, volunteers and parents is the League's priority.**

We will encourage proper precaution when dealing with blood, open wounds, and any communicable diseases. When communicable diseases are at a heightened state during a season, additional protocol may be provided in a separate document ([Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association \(cwill.org\)](http://Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association (cwill.org)))

The thirteen requirements of a qualified safety plan

Requirement 1:

Make sure your league has an individual named as Safety Officer

- Calgary West Little League has an elected safety officer who is a member of the executive committee.
- There is a formal job description for the position (see appendix one)

Requirement 2:

Compile all the materials and make available to volunteers/parents on the League's Site

- [Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association \(cwll.org\)](http://www.cwll.org)

Requirement 3:

Emergency plan, numbers and locations

- Coaches will be trained to develop an emergency plan for use at their practices and games
- Coaches will identify hospitals and walk-in clinics close to the diamonds we utilize.
- Emergency Contact Information for local and emergency health authorities can be reached on anyone's cell phone by dialing 311 (for Police, Fire and Emergency services). Closest hospitals are Foothills Hospital and Rockyview General Hospital.

Requirement 4:

Require Volunteer Applications and Background Checks

- Calgary West Little League has entered into an agreement with the Calgary Police Service to provide a background check on all volunteers within the organization. This includes a complete criminal background check and not just for sexual offenses against children. Calgary West Little League is committed to the safety of our children and requires this of all volunteers to minimize the risk of exposing the children to someone with an offense against minors. To protect the privacy of our volunteers, the Calgary police service simply returns a cleared or not cleared verdict for the search. It is then up to the individual whether they wish to discuss the situation and reasons for not clearing with the President or withdrawing from a volunteer position. See link for the electronic Police Information Check (ePIC) process detail. ([Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association \(cwll.org\)](http://www.cwll.org))
- Once a volunteer has been cleared through the ePIC process, their name is maintained in a database which tracks the currency of the clearance letters as they are valid for a three-year period.

- Calgary West Little League has always required volunteers to complete an application form. Calgary West Little league has adopted the standard of [volunteer application form](#) of Little League Canada. See link for a copy of the Volunteer Application form used. ([Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association \(cwill.org\)](#))
- Volunteer- other forms of identification, this has never been an issue for Calgary West Little League perhaps due to our relatively small size of approximately 1,000 participants. We are a small enough organization that the parents and coaches tend to know one another and people who should not belong on the fields are quickly identified.

Requirement 5:

Provide coaches and managers with fundamentals training

- We are of the firm belief that the number one piece of safety equipment is a trained and knowledgeable coach. To this end, Calgary West Little league is dedicated to the training, development and mentoring of its coaches.
- Canada has a program for the sport specific certification of volunteer coaches called the National Coaching Certification Program. Coaches are encouraged to participate in this program to at least the Initiation or Level 1 Technical as well clearing a criminal records check.
- For the 2021 baseball season, new and existing coaches will have different opportunities to acquire knowledge of basic fundamental baseball skills and how to coach them.
- We will move towards a standard where, at a minimum standard for all coaches will be:
 - Successfully pass a screening check and complete a volunteer application
 - Successfully complete a Little League Coaching or NCCP Clinic
- Calgary West Little League provides every coach with comprehensive training material incorporating basic fundamentals of baseball, conditioning and stretching, characteristics of a good coach and practice planning.

Requirement 6:

Require each team to identify a first-aid responder

- Calgary West Little League will try to ensure that every team has at least one parent or coach who is certified and at least basic first aid and/or CPR or the equivalent.
- Every team is supplied with a first aid kit from the St. John's Ambulance Society or an equivalently equipped first-aid kit. St. John's ambulance has formed a partnership with Little League Canada and provides these first-aid kits at a reduced cost.

Requirement 7:*Require field inspections before games and practices*

- Inclement weather can present a safety concern in any jurisdiction. In Calgary, specific concerns would include lightning, excessive rain, low temperatures and snow. Another issue in the Calgary area for weather is that there can be considerable variation in a relatively small area. Hence, the decision to cancel a game prior to its start due to weather conditions must be made by the coaches concerned with knowledge of the actual conditions at the field where they're going to play. Once started, the decision to proceed, delay or call a game due to unsafe weather conditions rests with the designated umpire for the game. In recognition of the fact that sometimes umpires are parent volunteers with little or no training, particularly at the introductory levels such as T-ball, the initiative to ask whether a game should continue may need to rest with the coaches. All coaches should refer to weather information including Internet web sites specifically providing weather warnings, lightning reports for the Calgary area.
- Given that low evening temperatures can also be a factor particularly in early-season games, coaches will also be made aware of the impact of the wind-chill factor in children's safety and enjoyment of the game
- Our Diamond Coordinator will be identifying and bringing to the attention of the City of Calgary any deficiencies in our diamonds and arranging repairs to be completed where possible. Coaches will also be responsible for reporting diamond maintenance or safety issues to the league and/or the City of Calgary.
- It has always been the expectation of Calgary West Little League, that Diamond Coordinator's, coaches and umpires prepare and inspect the field before each practice and game.
- For players 8 years old and younger (BlastBall through Rookie Ball), and sometimes even for older divisions, Calgary West Little League relies upon parent volunteers for umpires with the home team supplying the home plate umpire and the visiting team the base umpire. To support parents in this challenging task, Calgary West Little League offers basic umpiring clinics at the start of every season. For players eleven and older (Majors/AA to senior), Calgary West Little League employs umpires from a local umpire association. The conduct of these umpires falls under the supervision of this organization. However, in our experience, the majority of these umpires are careful to inspect the field conditions and to impose any necessary rule modifications to ensure safety.

Requirement 8:*Complete Annual Little League Facility Survey***Diamonds:**

- All CWLL diamonds are owned and operated by the Calgary Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Calgary and Springbank Park. CWLL therefore has no direct control over facilities. However, CWLL has developed good working relationships with Parks and Recreation and SPFAS and will continue to do so. We have a diamond maintenance representative on the Executive who surveys all the diamonds used by CWLL and brings any safety deficiencies to the attention of the appropriate department.
- A facility survey will be completed prior to the start of the season by the Diamond Coordinator. This information will be shared with the Calgary Parks and Recreation and arrangements made to address any safety deficits that are identified.

Requirement 9:*Have written safety procedures for concession stand***Concessions:**

There are no permanent concession stands in CWLL. However, from time to time temporary concession stands are established. Opening Day and an annual Majors/Minors Tournament(s) are occasions when such stands are in use. At these times, organizers of these events will ensure that the concession stands meet local health codes and that all staff have been briefed on proper procedures.

Requirement 10:*Require regular inspection and replacement of equipment*

- Calgary West Little League has a volunteer Equipment Coordinator who is responsible for inspecting, maintaining and replacing equipment supplied by Calgary West Little League. All equipment purchased meets or exceeds the safety requirements of Little League International. This is all done in the off-season prior to the distribution of equipment to the coaches at the start of the season.
- During the season, the primary responsibility for the inspection and replacement of equipment rests with the coaches. This is particularly true in ensuring that any equipment provided by the players themselves meet safety standards. As well, as provided in the rules, umpires can examine and exclude any piece of equipment that they do not feel is in accordance with the rules as laid out in the annual rulebook.
- Calgary West Little League goes above and beyond the requirements of Little League International by requiring all players to wear groin protection during practices and games and not just catchers.

Requirement 11:*Have a method to report, track injuries*

- A copy of the tracking form will be on the league web site available for download at any time ([Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association \(cwill.org\)](http://Forms & Documents - Calgary West Little League Association (cwill.org))). Coaches will be reminded of the importance of completing forms and submitting them to the Safety Officer so that appropriate steps can be taken in future to further reduce accidents.

Requirement 12:*Provide teams with well-equipped First-Aid Kits*

- Calgary West Little League has always provided its teams with first aid kits.
- A partnership has been developed between St. John's Ambulance Service and Little League Canada. As a result, the leagues across Canada are able to purchase well equipped first aid kits at a significant discount.

Requirement 13:*Enforce the Rules*

- In a league such as Calgary West Little League, where there is an emphasis and a reliance upon an honor system, particularly in the Blast Ball through Rookie Ball levels of play, where carded umpires are usually not available, this presents an ongoing challenge. Even with the older levels of play, expediency sometimes rules over safety, particularly with rules such as not having a parent or coach catch warm-up while the catcher gets ready. The answer to this dilemma lies in the twofold approach of significantly increasing safety education and awareness and widening the responsibility to the concept that everyone, at all times, is responsible for safety.
- The following safety awareness and education programs are in place:
 - Codes of conduct for players, coaches, parents and volunteers are included in Little League coaching materials, rule books and will be posted on the league website.
 - Parents, players, coaches, umpires and other volunteers will be strongly encouraged to identify safety concerns and safety suggestions and report them to the Safety Officer.
 - When the safety concern that is identified is a violation of an existing Little League rule, or a Calgary West Little League safety policy that has already been established, a general reminder will be sent out regarding that policy or rule.
 - When the safety concern is identified is a new one, appropriate new policy and procedures will be developed to address the concern.

Appendix One: Job Description

Calgary West Little League



Job Description¹

Title: Safety Officer

Authority

By unanimous action of the 1965 Little League International Congress and subsequent ratification of the Board of Directors, it was resolved that every chartered Little League shall appoint a Safety Officer. The Calgary West Little League Safety Officer is an advisory position. Managers, player agents and umpires must carry out their own duties and responsibilities in regards to safety. Final authority for enforcement of safety procedures rests with the President who may delegate that authority.

Selection:

The Safety Officer is an elected Executive Position. Any person with the time and enthusiasm may be Safety Officer. It is preferable to have someone with knowledge of coaching², baseball³ and safety issues.⁴

The following qualifications are an asset to the position:

1. Sufficient knowledge of baseball to evaluate and suggest corrective measures for hazards without conflicting with Little League Rules.
2. First hand experience with a safety program and/or an understanding of the importance of safety. Examples of people with indirect knowledge of safety would be doctors, insurance agents, and fire or police officers.
3. Such an officer should be a person who can sell safety measures on their own merits.
4. The officer should have the interest and the time to coordinate the safety efforts of other adults in the organization.

Responsibilities:

1. Development, modification and implementation of a Safety Plan
 - a. Research Safety Information
 - b. Identify Safety Concerns
 - c. Recommend equipment changes to executive
 - d. Track injuries
2. Maintain First Aid Kits
3. Disseminate Safety Information

¹ The following job description was modified from the Little League "Play it Safe" Manual available at <http://www.littleleague.org/programs/asap/2005safetymanual/Section4.pdf>

² NCCP coaching theory certification is strongly recommended

³ NCCP coaching practical training is recommended but there are many avenues for acquiring baseball knowledge

⁴ Such as a member of a health profession, fireman, WHMIS training, police officer, Red Cross trainer etcetera

The main responsibility of a League Safety Officer is to develop and implement the league's safety program. The following may help in carrying out the assigned duties.

1. Spot checks should be made at practices and games to be sure reasonable precautions are taken and assist wherever possible with advice and encouragement.
2. At the playing field, the League Safety Officer's first duty is to ensure first aid kits are available and emergency arrangements have been made for an ambulance or doctor.
3. The League Safety Officer's next obligation is to advise and follow up on the control of unsafe conditions. These will be brought to light by the adults in charge making a preliminary inspection of the field and being continually on the lookout for situations that might cause accidents. Since it would not only be impossible, but an invitation to "buck passing," for a League Safety Officer to keep a degree of control over accident exposures alone, such efforts will be effective only when that officer and league president have convinced fellow volunteer workers that safety should be a primary consideration in whatever they are doing.
4. In addition to the League Safety Officer's advising on the control of unsafe conditions throughout the season, it is a specific responsibility to follow up on procedures and methods of instruction that will help control the human elements that may be the cause of accidents. Here again the work must be done through existing lines of authority in the organization to make accident prevention a matter of league policy rather than an afterthought applied on a hit-or-miss basis.

Organized Plan

The first duty of a new League Safety Officer is to sit down with the League President and prepare a safety program for the league. It should have the essential objectives of assuring that:

1. Practice and playing field conditions are made as safe as possible.
2. Players protective equipment and other facilities are available and in good condition.
3. Arrangements have been made for first aid treatment and more severe emergencies.
4. All managers, player agents, coaches and umpires have been instructed in the inclusion of suitable safety precautions as an integral part of their regular duties.
5. Other volunteers, such as grounds keepers and auxiliary members are carrying out their jobs safely.
6. Arrangements are made for the prompt investigation and reporting of accidents and near-misses with a definite follow up for the prevention of further accidents of a similar nature.
7. Procedures are in place for prompt and timely reporting of accidents requiring medical treatment to Little League Headquarters. The best way to institute such a plan is to call a meeting of key personnel, particularly the managers and umpires. If the safety plan or program is to be effective, they must not only agree that safety is essential to the operation of their Little League, but that they will do their part to make it succeed. They should also express a willingness to accept the help and advice of the League Safety Officer.