



AASCF CHEERLEADING SAFETY GUIDELINES

The modern cheerleader has to possess the strength of a football player, the stamina of a track runner, the agility of a gymnast & the grace of a ballerina!

Too often in athletic activities, injury is the catalyst to undertake a review of management and to emphasise safety awareness. It must be recognized that an effective safety program is rarely, if ever, a result of passive awareness, the principles and thoughts outlined in this chapter must be carefully considered by both cheer participants and coaches/advisers alike.

- 1. APPRECIATE THE RISK!** Participation in cheerleading activities involves motion, rotation, and height in a unique environment and, as such, carries with it an increased element of risk.
- 2. ALWAYS BE SUPERVISED!** Never participate in any cheerleading activity without competent supervision.
- 3. DRESS APPROPRIATELY!** Dress in accordance with the cheerleading activity. Hard jewellery should never be permitted. When in doubt, consult your coach/advisor.
- 4. DOUBLE-CHECK ENVIRONMENT!** Always double-check the environment to insure that the participation area is free of hazards, properly set-up, and appropriate to the intended activity.
- 5. BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE!** Make certain that you are both physically and psychologically ready to participate. Adequate fitness is essential to safe practices in cheerleading. Whenever in doubt, consult your coach/advisor.
- 6. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND ACCURATELY!** Establish a clear, accurate, communicative link with your coach/advisor as well as with your fellow participants. Make sure that all involved know exactly what, when, where, how and why the skill is to be performed and/or spotted.
- 7. MASTER BASIC SKILLS FIRST!** Always follow a simple-to-complex task progression in skill learning. Safe learning practices dictate mastering a broad range of basic skills before moving on to the new and/or difficult ones. If you have not been shown how - then don't stunt. **PERFECTION BEFORE PROGRESSION**
- 8. UNDERSTAND THE TOTAL SKILL!** Develop an accurate visual concept of the full potential of the skill, especially in terms of its more critical aspects. This is particularly important in partner stunts and pyramid building.
- 9. BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED!** Once you decide to "go" for a movement or skill, always follow through to its full completion. Be keenly aware that protection of your head and spinal column is the prime consideration.
- 10. KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS!** Always remember that participants have differing skill and ability levels. Develop a health awareness and respect for your own limitations in learning and performing cheerleading activities.