



RISK MANAGEMENT

DUTY OF CARE:

“The duty which rests upon an individual or

organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible”.

Running any activity, especially where children involved, carries the responsibility for Duty of Care. You must take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of participants.

Cheerleading is a vigorous athletic activity, and as such an element of risk exists, as with any other vigorous athletic activity. The goal of risk management in cheerleading is to identify and eliminate all avoidable risks, and to minimise other risks through qualified coaching good communications and effective training techniques.

Develop a Safety Plan:

- Have relevant training and qualifications.
- Have relevant insurance cover.
- Be CRB checked if working with children or vulnerable adults.
- At least one staff member should have basic First Aid training.
- Follow BCA safety rules together with NFSHSA requirements.
- Always use safety mats for stunting or tumbling, and use the stunt safety code.
- Carry out and record a Risk Assessment of your training hall.
- Write and distribute an emergency plan, with what to do and who is responsible for what actions.
- Have parents complete and sign a Health Form with any relevant medical conditions.
- Inform parents, in writing, of all relevant information. Have them sign and return a copy to show they have read and understood it.
- Keep record cards of club members handy, with relevant medical information and emergency contact numbers.
- Work to your safety plan, and review it periodically.

Document:

Keep detail records, not just of attendance. If an incident occurs record what you did, who you called, and appropriate steps taken. You may be called upon later to produce this evidence.

Inform:

Have a club constitution defining the clubs purpose, with roles and responsibilities of both staff and participants. Ensure that participants

and parents are kept fully informed of club requirements, procedures, and emergency plan. It is a good idea to include details of appropriate qualifications held, courses attended, and insurance details. Make all aware of the Child Protection Policy, who the club Welfare Officer is, and what to do in case of concerns.

Safe working practices:

- Elimination of avoidable risks.
- Take all steps to minimise other risks.
- Ensure you train in a safe environment.
- Never cut corners on safety, or put winning before welfare.
- Educate, document, communicate.
- Anticipate risks. Imagine possible incidents and ask yourself “what could I have done?”, and do it before it happens.
- Effective spotting technique is priority before building stunts.
- Master basics before being tempted to try more advanced techniques.
- Stunts come down. Ask yourself “Can we catch 100% of collapsing stunts?”. If the answer is no, go back to basics.
- Injuries are never acceptable or inevitable, zero tolerance policy applies.
- Never put children on 2.5 or 3 high stunts, when it goes wrong no professional body will back you.
- Safety is not a learning curve, everything barred in the NF rules is there with good historical reason.

Taking all reasonable safeguards protects your cheerleaders, and you.



For example Club Constitution, Health Form, Stunt Safety Guidelines, Code of Ethics, Child Protection Policy, CRB processing, visit the BCA website www.cheerleading.org.uk ‘Info & Resources’ from the main menu.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Is your training facility safe? Have you taken all steps to identify areas of potential hazards, set out measures to identify such hazards, recorded them, together with steps to be taken to remove or minimise these hazards.

The circumstances of design of training facilities varies greatly and a standard solution to cover every venue is not practicable. Carrying out a Risk Assessment is the first step.

1. Look for the hazards
2. Decide who may be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Record your findings
5. Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

Potential hazards include: Is space safely adequate for number of students, do sufficient safety mats exist and are they deployed, is

ceiling height adequate for stunting, any overhead obstructions, is floor clear of obstructions, fire exists and fire drill procedures, kitchen areas with electrical appliances (supervision required).

Recording such information, and steps taken, identifies and minimises risks. It shows you are working to a safety plan. Head your form with details of the venue, and assessment undertaken, including date. Three columns, the first identifies significant hazards, the second who may be affected or harmed by hazards identified, the third lists existing controls and any actions that may be needed as Normal Operating Procedures.

BCA run events are fully site-evaluated, and planned accordingly for your safety.

Below is an extract from a typical squad practice hall Risk Assessment. Look for every possible hazard, record it with steps taken, keep a copy handy, and review it periodically.

RISK ASSESMENT FOR		(name of venue)	Date: (assessment done)
CARRIED OUT BY		(Name of club official)	Date for future review:
Potential risk / hazard	Who may be affected	Steps taken to eliminate / minimise risk	
Basic suitability of venue for cheerleading. Adequate size, ceiling height, safe floor surface, no hazardous obstructions.	Cheerleaders	Venue facilities meet BCA safety standards	
Furniture in hall could become a hazard if someone falls on it.	Cheerleaders parents and club staff	Stack loose furniture out of the way before practice starts	
Electrical lead for music system could become a trip or electric shock hazard	Cheerleaders parents and club staff	Tape lead to floor if it cannot be shortened or safely stowed.	
Risk of collision if spectators / parents sit too close	Cheerleaders spectators and parents	Hall size is such that parents and spectators must wait outside.	
Loose items left on floor could create a trip hazard	Cheerleaders parents and club staff	Bags jackets and poms placed in designated area.	
Risk of injury if someone falls from a stunt	Cheerleaders	Coach is qualified to teach stunts. Cheerleaders are trained in safe spotting techniques, we always use safety mats for stunts	
Kitchen off hall has cooker, risk of burn or electrocution	Cheerleaders	Supervise kitchen or keep it locked.	
<i>Don't just copy this brief example, do your own detailed assessment</i>	You		